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VOL. 954.

MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WORKS

By EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MISCELLANEOUS

PROSE WORKS.

BY

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1868.

the nankin jacket and green spectacles — who but a schoolgirl ought to sympathize in such disappointments?

We hear a great deal about the difference between the Objective and the Subjective order of Genius — *i. e.* between the writer who casts himself out among others and so forgets his individuality, and the writer who subjects others to himself, and in treating of them still preserves his individuality distinct. But this distinction would be a very unsafe guide for an arbitrary judgment on the character of the author himself, though it may serve to define one kind of composition from another. The true lyrical writer must chiefly express himself, his own impulsive sentiments, feelings, opinions, passions; — the true dramatic writer must chiefly express others, their sentiments, feelings, opinions, and passions. Hence the same writer may be subjective or objective according to the work he writes; — as no writer can be more objective than Shakspeare in his dramas, or more subjective than Shakspeare in his sonnets.

For my own part I believe that, putting aside all reference to mere outward show or conventional accomplishments, and making but a fair allowance for human foibles and frailties, the works of an author are a faithful representation of his genuine nature — except that in proportion as the author excels in the richer and higher attributes of genius,

he is in his nature superior to all that he can express in his books, and most unquestionably has within himself an affluence of thought and a loftiness of aspiration which he can never adequately make visible in print. I believe this to be true, even of poets like La Fontaine, who succeed only in a particular line. But it is doubly true of the mass of great Authors, who are mostly various, accomplished, and all-attempting: such men never can perfect their own numberless conceptions, nor realize their own ideals of excellence.

An ancient writer says that there cannot be "a good poet who is not first a good man." This is a paradox, and yet it is not *far* from the truth: a good poet may not be a good man, but he must have certain good dispositions. Above all, that disposition which sympathises with noble sentiments — with lofty actions — with the beauty discoverable not only in external nature, but in that masterpiece of Creation, the human mind. This disposition may not suffice to make him a good man — its influence may be counteracted a hundred ways in life, but it is not counteracted in his compositions. *There* the better portion of his intellect awakes — there he gives vent to enthusiasm, and enthusiasm to generous and warm emotions. We have been told, though on very unsatisfactory evidence, that Sterne could be harsh in his conduct to relatives. But there can be no doubt that his heart was tender

enough when he wrote of 'Poor Maria.' He was not, then, belying his real nature; he was truthfully expressing the gentlest part of it. The contrast between softness in emotion, and callousness in conduct, is not however peculiar to poets and writers of sentiment. Nero was womanishly affected by the harp; and we are told by Plutarch that Alexander Pheræus, who was one of the sternest of tyrants, shed a torrent of tears upon the acting of a play. So that he who had furnished the most matter for tragedies, was most affected by the pathos of a tragedy! But who shall say that *the feelings* which produced such emotions, even in such men, were not laudable and good? Who that has stood in the dark caverns of the human heart, shall dare to scoff at the contrast between act and sentiment, instead of lamenting it? When a man comes into collision with others, various passions or feelings may be aroused which suspend, though they do not destroy, the operation of impulses to good which would be constitutionally natural to him if left to himself. Of our evil feelings, there is one in especial which is the usual characteristic of morbid literary men, though, hitherto, it has escaped notice as such, and which is the cause of many of the worst faults to be found both in the Author and the Tyrant: this feeling is *Suspicion;* and I think I am justified in calling it the characteristic of morbid literary men. Their quick susceptibilities make them over-sensible of injury, they exaggerate the enmities

they have awakened — the slanders they have incurred. They are ever fearful of a trap: nor this in literature alone. Knowing that they are not adepts in the world's common business, they are perpetually afraid of being taken in: and, feeling their various peculiarities, they are often equally afraid of being ridiculed. Thus suspicion, in all ways, and all shapes, besets them; this makes them now afraid to be generous, and now to be kind; and acting upon a soil that easily receives, but rarely loses an impression, that melancholy vice soon obdurates and encrusts the whole conduct of the acting man. But in literary composition it sleeps. The thinking man then hath no enemy at his desk, — no hungry trader at his elbow, — no grinning spy on his uncouth gestures. His soul is young again — he is what he embodies; and the feelings, checked in the real world, obtain their vent in the imaginary. It was the *Good Natural*, to borrow a phrase from the French, that spoke in Rousseau, when he dwelt with so glowing an eloquence on the love that he bore to mankind. It was the Good Natural that stirred in the mind of Alexander Pheræus when he wept at the mimic sorrows subjected to his gaze. When to either came the test of practical action and collision with the real world other passions were aroused; and, alike to Author and to Tyrant, Suspicion peopled the world with foes, and tainted the atmosphere with hate.

Thus tender sentiments may be accompanied with cruel actions, and yet the solution of the enigma be easy to the inquirer; and thus, though the life of an Author does not correspond with the spirit of his works, his nature may.

But this view is the most partial of all, — and I have, therefore, considered it the first. How few instances there are of that discrepancy, which I have just touched upon, between the life of the author and the spirit of his books! How finely, in most instances, does the one maintain concord with the other! Look at the life of Schiller, — how faithfully his works reflect the turbulence of his earlier and the serenity of his later genius — preserving in each his special idiosyncrasy in one constitutional grandeur of sentiment aiming at old heroic types and infusing the power of the Titan into the struggles of Man against the Fate which overmasters him. Sir Philip Sidney* is the Arcadia put into action; — Johnson is no less visible in the 'Rambler,' in 'Rasselas,' in the 'Lives of the Poets,' than in his large chair at Mrs. Thrale's — his lonely chamber in the dark court out of Fleet Street — or his leonine unbendings with the canicular soul of Boswell. I might go on enumerating these instances for ever: — Dante, Petrarch, Voltaire, rush on my

* "Poetry put into action" is the fine saying of Campbell as applied to Sidney's life.

memory as I write, — but to name them is enough to remind the reader that, if he would learn their characters, he has only to read their works. I have been much pleased in tracing the life of Paul Louis Courier. When he was in the army in Italy, he did not distinguish himself by bravery in his profession of soldier, but by daring in his pursuits as an antiquarian! Disdainful alike of personal danger and of military glory — sympathising with none of the objects of others — wandering alone over the remains of old — falling a hundred times into the hands of the *brigands*, and a hundred times extricating himself by his address, and continuing the same pursuits with the same nonchalance; — in all this the character of the man is in strict unison with the genius of the writer who, in his works, views with a gay contempt the ambition and schemes of others — sneers alike at a Bourbon and a Buonaparte — and, despising subordination, rather than courting persecution, defies all authorities that could interfere with his absolute right to do as he pleases with his own mind, and follows with the sportiveness of whim ideas conceived with the earnestness of conviction.

A critic, commenting on the writings of some popular author, observed, that they contained two views of life, contradictory of each other, — the one inclining to the ideal and lofty, the other to the worldly and cynical. The critic remarked, that

"this might arise from the Author having two separate characters, — a circumstance less uncommon than the world supposed." There is great depth in the critic's observation. An Author usually *has* two characters, — the one belonging to his imagination — the other to his experience. From the one come all his higher embodyings: by the help of the one he elevates — he refines; from the other come his beings of "the earth, earthy," and aphorisms of worldly caution. From the one broke — bright, yet scarce distinct — the Rebecca of 'Ivanhoe,' — from the other rose, shrewd and selfish, the Andrew Fairservice of 'Rob Roy.' The original of the former need never to have existed — her elements belonged to the Ideal; but the latter was purely the creature of Experience, and either copied from one, or moulded unconsciously from several, of the actual denizens of the living world. In Shakspeare the same doubleness of character is remarkably visible. The loftiest Ideal is perpetually linked with the most exact copy of the commoners of life. Shakspeare had never seen Miranda — but he had drunk his glass with honest Stephano. Each character embodies a separate view of life — the one (to return to my proposition) the off-spring of Imagination, the other of Experience. This complexity of character — which has often puzzled the inquirer — may, I think, thus be easily explained — and the seeming contradiction of the tendency of the work traced home to the con-

flicting principles in the breast of the writer. The more a man of imagination sees of the world, the more likely to be prominent is the distinction I have noted.

I cannot leave the subject — though the following remark is an episode from the inquiry indicated by my title — without observing that the characters drawn by Experience stand necessarily out from the canvas in broader and more startling colours than those created by the Imagination. Hence superficial critics have often considered the humorous and coarse characters of a novelist or a dramatist as his best — forgetful that the very indistinctness of his ideal characters is not only inseparable from the nature of purely imaginary creations, but a proof of the exaltation and intenseness of the imaginative power. The most shadowy and mistlike of all Scott's heroes is the Master of Ravenswood, and yet it is perhaps the highest of his characters in execution as well as conception. Those strong colours and bold outlines, which strike the vulgar gaze as belonging to the best pictures, belong rather to the lower schools of Art. Let us take a work — the greatest the world possesses in those schools, and in which the flesh-and-blood vitality of the characters is especially marked — I mean 'Tom Jones' — and compare it with 'Hamlet.' The chief characters in 'Tom Jones' are all plain, visible; eating, drinking, and walking beings; those in 'Hamlet' are shadowy, solemn,

and mysterious: we do not associate them with the ordinary wants and avocations of earth; they are

> "Lifeless, but lifelike, and awful to sight,
> Like the figures in arras that gloomily glare,
> Stirred by the breath of the midnight air."

But who shall say that the characters in 'Tom Jones' are better drawn than those in 'Hamlet;' or that there is greater skill necessary in the highest walk of the Actual School, than in that of the Imaginative? Yet there are some persons who, secretly in their hearts, want Hamlet to be as large in the calves as Tom Jones! These are they who blame 'Lara' for being indistinct — that very indistinctness shedding over the poem the sole interest it was capable of receiving. To such critics, Undine is not a true creation of genius, because they never saw anything like her when they angled for dace in the Thames.

We may observe in Humorous Authors that the faults they chiefly ridicule have often a likeness in themselves. Cervantes had much of the knight-errant in him; — Sir George Etherege was unconsciously the Fopling Flutter of his own satire; — Goldsmith was the same hero to chambermaids, and coward to ladies, that he has immortalised in his charming comedy; — and the antiquarian frivolities of Jonathan Oldbuck had their resemblance in Jona-

than Oldbuck's creator. The pleasure or the pain we derive from our own foibles makes enough of our nature to come off somewhere or other in the impression we stamp of ourselves on books.

There is — as I think it has been somewhere remarked by a French writer — there is that in our character which never can be seen except in our writings. Yes, all that we have formed from the Ideal — all our vague aspirations — our haunting visions — our yearnings for some excellence so beyond our reach that it would seem to others a presumption to have cherished them — are not these the mysteries within ourselves which we are forbidden to reveal to uninitiated hearers? Yet what he cannot tell to the one man, the author will intimate to the Public, because the Public seems to him less an entity than an abstraction.

Would it have been possible for Rousseau to have gravely communicated to a living being the tearful egotisms of his 'Reveries'? — Could Shakespeare have uttered the wild confessions of his Sonnets to his friends at the Mermaid? — Should we have any notion of the youthful character of Milton — its lustrous and crystal purity — if the 'Comus' had been unwritten? Authors are the only men we ever really *do* know, — the rest of mankind die with only the surface of their character understood. True, as I have before said, even in an Author, if of large and fertile mind, much of his most sacred self is

never to be revealed, — but still we know what species of ore the mine would have produced, though we may not have exhausted its treasure.

Thus, then, to sum up what I have said, so far from there being truth in the vulgar notion that the character of Authors is belied in their works, their works are, to a diligent inquirer, their clearest and fullest illustration — an appendix to their biography far more valuable and explanatory than the text itself. From this fact, we may judge of the beauty and grandeur of the materials of the human mind, although those materials are so often perverted, and their harmony so fearfully marred. It also appears that, despite the real likeness between the book and the man, the vulgar will not fail to be disappointed, because they look to externals; and the man composed the book, not with his face, nor his dress, nor his manners, but with his mind. Hence, then, to proclaim yourself disappointed with the Author is usually to condemn your own accuracy of judgment, and your own secret craving for stage effect. Moreover, it would appear, on looking over these remarks, that there is truth in the assertion that an Author has, not unoften, two separate characters; the one essentially drawn from the poetry of life, the other from its prose; and that hence are to be explained many seeming contradictions and inconsistencies in his works. Lastly, that so far from the book belying the author, unless he had written that

book, you, — even if you are his nearest relation, his dearest connexion — his wife — his mother, — would never have known the character of his mind. "Hæ pulcherrimæ effigies et mansuræ." All biography proves this fact. Who so astonished as a man's relations when he has exhibited his *genius*, which is the soul and core of his *character?* Had Alfieri or Rousseau died at the age of thirty, what would all who had personally known either have told us of them? Would they have given us the faintest notion of their characters? — None. A man's mind is betrayed by his talents as much as by his virtues. A Councillor of a Provincial Parliament had a brother a mathematician; — "How unworthy in my brother," cried the Councillor; "the brother of a councillor of the Parliament in Bretagne to sink into a paltry mathematician!" That mathematician was Descartes! What should we know of the character of Descartes, supposing him to have renounced the pursuit of science, as he at one time intended, and his brother, who might fairly be supposed to know his life and character better than any one else, to have written his biography? — A reflection that may teach us how biography in general ought to be estimated.

MONOS AND DAIMONOS.

I AM English by birth, but my early years were passed in a foreign and more northern land. I had neither brothers nor sisters; my mother died when I was in the cradle; and I found my sole companion, tutor, and playmate in my father. He was a younger brother of a noble and ancient house: what induced him to forsake his country and his friends, to abjure all society, and to live on a rock, is a story in itself, which has nothing to do with mine.

I said my father lived on a rock — the whole country round seemed nothing but rock: — wastes, bleak, blank, dreary; trees stunted, herbage blighted; caverns, through which some black and wild stream (that never knew star nor sunlight, but through rare and hideous chasms amidst the huge stones above it) went dashing and howling along its stormy course; vast cliffs, covered with eternal snows, where the birds of prey lived, and sent, in harsh screams, a music suited to skies which seemed too barren to wear even clouds upon their wan, grey, comfortless

expanse: these made the character of that country where the spring of my life sickened itself away. The climate which, in the milder parts of ****, relieves the nine months of winter with three months of an abrupt and autumnless summer, little varied the desolate aspect of the landscape immediately around my home. Perhaps, for a brief interval, the snow in the valleys melted, and the streams swelled, and a ghastly, unnatural kind of vegetation, seemed here and there to scatter a grim smile over minute particles of the universal rock; but to these scanty witnesses of the changing season the summers of my boyhood were confined. My father was addicted to the sciences — the physical sciences — and possessed but a moderate share of learning in anything else; he taught me all he knew; and the rest of my education, Nature, in a savage and stern guise, instilled into my heart by silent but deep lessons. She taught my feet to bound, and my arm to smite; she breathed life into my passions, and shed darkness over my temper; she taught me to cling to her, even in her most rugged and unalluring form, and to shrink from all else — from the companionship of man, and the soft smiles of woman, and the shrill voice of childhood, and the ties, and hopes, and social gaieties of existence, as from a torture and a curse. Even in that sullen rock, and beneath that ungenial sky, I had luxuries unknown to the palled tastes of cities, or to those who woo delight in an air of odours and

in a land of roses! What were those luxuries? They had a myriad varieties and shades of enjoyment — they had but a common name. What were those luxuries? — *Solitude!*

My father died when I was eighteen; I was transferred to my uncle's protection, and I repaired to London. I arrived there, gaunt and stern, a giant in limbs and strength, and, to the judgment of those about me, a savage in mood and bearing. They would have laughed, but I awed them; they would have altered *me*, but I changed *them;* I threw a damp over their enjoyments. Though I said little, though I sat with them estranged, and silent, and passive, they seemed to wither beneath my presence. None could live with me and be happy, or at ease! I felt it, and I hated them that they could not love me. Three years passed — I was of age — I demanded my fortune — and scorning social life, and pining once more for loneliness, I resolved to travel to those unpeopled and far lands, which if any have pierced, none have returned to describe. So I took my leave of them all — cousins, and aunt, and uncle.

I commenced my pilgrimage — I pierced the burning sands — I traversed the vast deserts — I came into the enormous woods of Africa, where human step never trod, nor human voice ever startled the thrilling and intense solemnity that broods over the great solitudes, as it brooded over chaos before the world

was! There the primeval nature springs and perishes, undisturbed and unvaried by the convulsions of the surrounding world; the seed becomes the tree, lives through its uncounted ages, falls and moulders, and rots and vanishes; there the slow Time moves on, unwitnessed in its mighty and mute changes, save by the wandering lion, or that huge serpent — a hundred times more vast than the puny boa which travellers have boasted to behold. There, too, as beneath the heavy and dense shade I couched in the scorching noon, I heard the trampling as of an army, and the crash and fall of the strong trees, and saw through the matted boughs the Behemoth pass on its terrible way, with its eyes burning as a sun, and its white teeth arched and glistening in the rabid jaw, as pillars of spar glitter in a cavern; the monster to whom those wastes alone are a home, and who never, since the waters rolled from an earth transformed, has been given to human gaze and wonder but my own! Seasons glided on, but I counted them not; they were not doled out to me by the tokens of man, nor made sick to me by the changes of his base life, and the evidence of his sordid labour. Seasons glided on, and my youth ripened into manhood, and manhood grew grey with the first frost of age; and then a vague and restless spirit fell upon me, and I said in my foolish heart, "I will look upon the countenances of my race once more!" I retraced my steps — I recrossed the wastes — I re-entered the cities

— I resumed the garb of civilized man; for hitherto I had been naked in the wilderness. I repaired to a seaport, and took ship for England.

In the vessel there was one man, and only one, who neither avoided my companionship nor recoiled from my frown. He was an idle and curious being, full of the frivolities, and egotisms, and self-importance of those to whom towns are homes, and talk has become a mental aliment. He was one pervading, irritating, offensive tissue of little and low thoughts. The only meanness he had not was fear. It was impossible to awe, to silence, or to shun him. He sought me for ever; he was as a blister to me, which no force could tear away; my soul grew faint when my eyes met him. He was to my sight as those creatures which, from their very loathsomeness, are fearful to us, though we call them despicable. I longed to strangle him when he addressed me! Often I would have laid my hand on him, and hurled him into the sea to the sharks, which, quick-eyed and eager-jawed, swam night and day around our ship; but the gaze of many was on us, and I curbed myself, and turned away, and shut my eyes in very sickness; and when I opened them again, lo! he was by my side, and his sharp voice grated on my loathing ear! One night I was roused from my sleep by the screams and oaths of men, and I hastened on deck; we had struck upon a rock. It was a fearful, but a glorious sight! Moonlight still

and calm — the sea sleeping in sapphires; and in the midst of the silent and soft repose of all things, three hundred and fifty souls were to perish from the world! I sat apart, and looked on, and aided not. A voice crept like an adder's hiss into my ear; I turned, and saw my tormentor; the moonlight fell on his face, and it grinned with the maudlin grin of intoxication, and his pale blue eye glistened, and he said, "We will not part even here!" My blood ran coldly through my veins, and I would have thrown him into the sea, which now came upon us fast and faster; but the moon seemed to gaze on me as the eye of heaven, and I did not dare to kill him. But I would not stay to perish with the crew. I threw myself alone from the vessel and swam towards a rock. I saw a shark dart after me, but I shunned him, and the moment after he had plenty to sate his maw. I heard a crash, and a mingled and wild burst of anguish, — the anguish of three hundred and fifty hearts that a minute afterwards were stilled, and I said in my own heart, with a deep joy, "*His* voice is with the rest, and we have parted!" I gained the shore, and lay down to sleep.

The next morning my eyes opened upon a land more beautiful than a young man's dreams. The sun had just risen, and laughed over streams of silver, and trees bending with golden and purple fruits, and the diamond dew sparkled from a sod

covered with flowers, whose faintest breath was a delight. Ten thousand birds, with all the hues of a northern rainbow blended in their glancing wings, rose from turf and tree, and filled the air with the melodies of their gladness; the sea, without a vestige of the past destruction upon its glassy brow, murmured at my feet; the heavens, without a cloud, warmed my veins with its golden light. I rose refreshed and buoyant; I traversed the new home I had found; I climbed a hill, and saw that I was in a small island; it had no trace of man, and my heart swelled as I gazed around and cried aloud in my exultation, "I shall be alone again!" I descended the hill: I had not yet reached its foot, when I beheld the figure of a man approaching towards me. I looked at him, and my heart misgave me. He drew nearer, and I saw that my despicable persecutor had escaped the waters, and now stood before me. He came up with his hideous grin and his twinkling eye; and he flung his arms round me — I would sooner have felt the slimy folds of the serpent — and said, with his grating and harsh voice, "Ha! ha! my friend, we shall be together still!" I looked at him with a grim brow, but I said not a word. There was a great cave by the shore, and I walked down and entered it, and the man followed me. "We shall live so happily here," said he; "we will never separate!" And my lip trembled, and my hand clenched of its own accord. It was now noon, and

hunger came upon me; I went forth and killed a deer, and I brought it home and broiled part of it on a fire of fragrant wood; and the man ate, and crunched, and laughed, and I wished that the bones had choked him; and he said, when we had done, "We shall have rare cheer here!" But I still held my peace. At last he stretched himself in a corner of the cave and slept. I looked at him, and saw that the slumber was heavy: and I went out and rolled a huge stone to the mouth of the cavern, and took my way to the opposite part of the island; — it was my turn to laugh then! I found out another cavern; and I made a bed of moss and of leaves, and I wrought a table of wood, and I looked out from the mouth of the cavern and saw the wide seas before me, and I said, "Now I shall be alone!"

When the next day came, I again went out and caught a kid, and brought it in, and prepared it as before; but I was not hungered and I could not eat, so I roamed forth and wandered over the island: the sun had nearly set when I returned. I entered the cavern, and sitting on my bed and by my table was that man whom I thought I had left buried alive in the other cave. He laughed when he saw me, and laid down the bone he was gnawing.

"Ha, ha!" said he, "thou wouldst have served me a rare trick; but there was a hole in the cave which thou didst not see, and I got out to seek thee. It was not a difficult matter, for the island is so

small; and now we *have* met, and we will part no more!"

I said to the man, "Rise, and follow me!" So he rose, and the food he quitted was loathsome in my eyes, for he had touched it. "Shall this thing reap and I sow?" thought I; and my heart felt to me like iron.

I ascended a tall cliff. "Look round," said I; "behold that stream which divides the island; thou shalt dwell on one side, and I on the other: but the same spot shall not hold us, nor the same feast supply!"

"That may never be!" quoth the man; "for I cannot catch the deer, nor spring upon the mountain kid; and if thou feedest me not, I shall starve!"

"Are there not fruits," said I, "and birds that thou mayest snare, and fishes which the sea throws up?"

"But I like them not," quoth the man, and laughed, "so well as the flesh of kids and deer!"

"Look then," said I, "look! by that grey stone, upon the opposite side of the stream, I will lay a deer or a kid daily, so that thou mayest have the food thou covetest; but if ever thou cross the stream and come into my kingdom, so sure as the sea murmurs, and the bird flies, I will slay thee!"

I descended the cliff, and led the man to the side of the stream. "I cannot swim," said he; so I took him on my shoulders and crossed the brook, and

I found him out a cave, and I made him a bed and a table like my own, and left him. When I was on my own side of the stream again, I bounded with joy, and lifted up my voice; "I shall be alone now," said I.

So two days passed, and I was alone. On the third I went after my prey; the noon was hot, and I was wearied when I returned. I entered my cavern, and, behold, the man lay stretched upon my bed. "Ha, ha!" said he, "here I am; I was so lonely at home that I have come to live with thee again!"

I frowned on the man with a dark brow, and I said, "So sure as the sea murmurs, and the bird flies, I will slay thee!" I seized him in my arms; I plucked him from my bed; I took him out into the open air, and we stood together on the smooth sand and by the great sea. A fear came suddenly upon me: I was struck with the awe of the still Spirit which reigns over solitude. Had a thousand been round us, I would have slain him before them all. I feared now because we were alone in the desert, with Silence and God! I relaxed my hold. "Swear," I said, "never to molest me again; swear to preserve unpassed the boundary of our several homes, and I will not kill thee!" "I cannot swear," answered the man: "I would sooner die than forswear the blessed human face, — even though that face be my enemy's!"

At those words my rage returned; I dashed the man to the ground, and I put my foot upon his breast, and my hand upon his neck, and he struggled for a moment — and was dead! I was startled; and as I looked upon his face I thought he seemed to revive; I thought the cold blue eye fixed upon me, and the vile grin returned to the livid mouth, and the hands which in the death-pang had grasped the sand, stretched themselves out to me. So I stamped on the breast again, and I dug a hole in the shore, and I buried the body. "And now," said I, "I am alone at last!" And then the *true* sense of loneliness, the vague, comfortless, objectless sense of desolation passed into me. And I shook — shook in every limb of my giant frame, as if I had been a child that trembles in the dark; and my hair rose, and my flesh crept, and I would not have stayed in that spot a moment more if I had been made young again for it. I turned away and fled — fled round the whole island; and gnashed my teeth when I came to the sea, and longed to be cast into some illimitable desert, that I might flee on for ever. At sunset I returned to my cave; I sat myself down on one corner of the bed, and covered my face with my hands; I thought I heard a noise; I raised my eyes, and, as I live, I saw on the other end of the bed the man whom I had slain and buried. There he sat, six feet from me, and nodded to me, and looked at me with his wan eyes, and laughed. I rushed from the cave — I en-

tered a wood — I threw myself down — there, opposite to me, six feet from my face, was the face of that man again! And my courage rose, and I spoke, but he answered not. I attempted to seize him, he glided from my grasp, and was still opposite, six feet from me as before. I flung myself on the ground, and pressed my face to the sod, and would not look up till the night came on, and darkness was over the earth. I then rose and returned to the cave; I lay down on my bed, and the man lay down by me; and I frowned and tried to seize him as before, but I could not, and I closed my eyes, and the man lay by me. Day followed day and it was the same. At board, at bed, at home and abroad, in my uprising and my downsitting, by day and at night, — there, by my bedside, six feet from me, and no more, was that ghastly and dead thing. And I said, as I looked upon the beautiful land and the still heavens, and then turned to that fearful comrade, "I shall never be alone again!" And the man laughed.

At last a ship came, and I hailed it; it took me up, and I thought, as I put my foot upon the deck, "I shall escape from my tormentor!" As I thought so, I saw him climb the deck too, and I strove to push him down into the sea, but in vain; he was by my side, and he fed and slept with me as before! I came home to my native land. I forced myself into crowds — I went to the feast, and I heard music; and I made thirty men sit with me, and watch by

day and by night. So I had thirty-*one* companions, and one was more social than all the rest.

At last I said to myself, "This is a delusion, and a cheat of the external senses, and the thing is *not*, save in my mind. I will consult those skilled in such disorders, and I will be alone again!"

I summoned one celebrated in purging from the mind's eye its films and deceits — I bound him by an oath to secrecy — and I told him my tale. He was a bold man and a learned, and promised me relief and release.

"Where is the figure now?" asked he, smiling; "I see it not."

And I answered, "It is six feet from us!"

"I see it not," said he again; "and if it were real, my senses would not receive the image less palpably than thine." And he spoke to me as schoolmen speak. I did not argue nor reply, but I ordered the servants to prepare a room, and to cover the floor with a thick layer of sand. When it was done, I bade the leech follow me into the room, and I barred the door. "Where is the figure now?" repeated he; and I said, "Six feet from us as before!" And the leech smiled. "Look on the floor!" said I, and I pointed to the spot; "what seest thou?" And the leech shuddered, and clung to me that he might not fall. "The sand there," said he, "was smooth when we entered; and now I see on that spot the print of human feet!"

And I laughed, and dragged my *living* companion on. "See," said I, "where we move what follows us!"

The leech gasped for breath: "The print," said he, "of those human feet!"

"Canst thou not minister to me, then?" cried I, in a sudden and fierce agony; "and must I *never* be alone again?"

And I saw the foot of the dead thing trace these words upon the sand: —

"SOLITUDE IS ONLY FOR THE GUILTLESS — EVIL THOUGHTS ARE COMPANIONS FOR A TIME — EVIL DEEDS ARE COMPANIONS THROUGH ETERNITY — THY HATRED MADE ME BREAK UPON THY LONELINESS — THY CRIME DESTROYS LONELINESS FOR EVER!"

ON THE DEPARTURE OF YOUTH.

In the seven stages of man's life there are three epochs more distinctly marked than the rest, viz. the departure of Boyhood — the departure of Youth — the commencement of Old Age. I consider the several dates of these epochs, in ordinary constitutions, to commence at fifteen, thirty, and fifty years of age. It is of the second that I am about to treat. When I call it the epoch for the departure of youth, I do not of course intend to signify that this, the prime and zenith of our years, is as yet susceptible of decay. Our frames are as young as they were five years before, it is the mind that has become matured. By youth I mean the growing and progressive season — its departure is only visible inasmuch as we have become, as it were, fixed and stationary. The qualities that peculiarly belong to youth — its "quick-thronging fancies," its exuberance of energy and feeling, cease to be our distinctions at thirty.*

* The author was some years short of thirty when this Essay was written. Possibly, had he written it at thirty, he would have assigned a more distant date to the departure of youth.

We are young but not youthful. It is not at thirty that we know the wild phantasies of Romeo — scarcely at thirty that we could halt irresolute in the visionary weaknesses of Hamlet. The passions of youth may be no less felt than heretofore; it is youth's sentiment we have lost. The muscles of the mind are firmer, but it is the nerve that is less susceptible, and vibrates no more to the lightest touch of pleasure or of pain. — Yes, it is the prime of our manhood which is the departure of our youth!

It seems to me that to reflective and lofty minds accustomed to survey, and fitted to comprehend, the great aims of life, — this is a period peculiarly solemn and important. It is a spot on which we ought to rest for a while from our journey. It is the summit of the hill from which we look down on two even divisions of our journey. We have left behind us a profusion of bright things; never again shall we traverse such fairy fields, with such eager hopes; never again shall we find the same

"Glory in the grass and splendour in the flower."

The dews upon the herbage are dried up. The morning is no more.

"We made a posy while the time ran by,
* * * * *
But Time did beckon to the flowers, and they

By noon most cunningly did steal away
And wither in the hand.
* * * * *
Farewell, dear flowers, sweetly your time ye spent!"*

We ought then to pause for a while — to review the past — to gather around us the memories and the warnings of experience — to feel that the lighter part of our destinies is completed — that the graver has begun — that our follies and our errors have become to us the monitors of wisdom: for since these are the tributes which Fate exacts from Mortality, they are not to be idly regretted, but to be solemnly redeemed. And if we are penetrated with this thought, our Past becomes the mightiest preacher to our Future. Looking back over the tombs of departed errors, we behold, by the side of each, the face of a warning angel! It is the prayer of a foolish heart, "Oh, that my time could return! — Oh, that this had been done, or that could be undone!" rather should we rejoice that so long a season of reparation yet remains to us, and that experience has taught us the lessons of suffering which make men wise. Wisdom is an acquisition purchased in proportion to the disappointments which our own frailties have entailed upon us. For no one is taught by the sufferings of another. We ourselves must have felt the burning in order to

* George Herbert.

shun the fire. To refer again to the beautiful poem I have already quoted, the flowers that were

> "Fit, while they lived, for smell and ornament,
> Serve, after death, for cures."*

At the age of thirty the characters of most men pass through a revolution. The common pleasures of the world have been tasted to the full and begin to pall. We have reduced to the sober test of reality the visions of youth — we no longer expect that perfection in our species which our inexperience at first foretold — we no longer chase frivolities, nor hope chimæras. Perhaps one of the most useful lessons that disappointment has taught us, is a true estimate of love. For at first we are too apt to imagine that woman (poor partner with ourselves in the frailties of humanity) must be perfect — that the dreams of the poets have a corporeal being, and that God has ordained to us that unclouded nature — that unchanging devotion — that unalterable heart, which it has been the great vice of Fiction to attribute to the daughters of clay. And, in hoping perfection, with how much excellence have we been discontented — to how many idols have we changed our worship! Thirsting for the Golden Fountain of the Fable, from how many streams have

* George Herbert.

we turned away, weary and in disgust! The experience which teaches us at last the due estimate of woman, has gone far to instruct us in the claims of men. Love, once the monopoliser of our desires, gives way to more manly and less selfish passions — and we wake from a false paradise to the real earth.

Not less important is the lesson which teaches us not to measure mankind by exaggerated standards of morality; for to imagine too fondly that men are gods, is to end by believing that they are demons: the young usually pass through a period of misanthropy, and the misanthropy is acute in proportion to their own generous confidence in human excellence. We the least forgive faults in those from whom we the most expected excellence. But out of the ashes of misanthropy benevolence rises again; we find many virtues where we had imagined all was vice — many acts of disinterested friendship where we had fancied all was calculation and fraud — and so gradually from the two extremes we pass to the proper medium; and feeling that no human being is wholly good, or wholly base, we learn that true knowledge of mankind which induces us to expect little and forgive much. The world cures alike the optimist and the misanthrope. Without this proper and sober estimate of men, we have neither prudence in the affairs of life, nor toleration for contrary opinions — we tempt the cheater, and then

condemn him — we believe so strongly in one faith, that we would sentence dissentients as heretics. It is experience alone that teaches us that he who is discreet is seldom betrayed, and that out of the opinions we condemn, often spring the actions we admire.

At the departure of youth, then, in collecting and investigating our minds, we should feel ourselves enriched with these results for our future guidance, viz. a knowledge of the true proportion of the passions, so as not to give to one the impetus which should be shared by all; a conviction of the idleness of petty objects which demand large cares, and that true gauge and measurement of men which shall neither magnify nor dwarf the attributes and materials of human nature. From these results we draw conclusions to make us not only wiser but better men. The years through which we have passed have probably developed in us whatever capacities we possess — they have taught us in what we are most likely to excel, and for what we are most fitted. We may come now with better success than Rasselas to the Choice of Life. And in this I incline to believe, that we ought to prefer that career from which we are convinced that our minds and tempers will derive the greatest share of happiness — not disdaining the pursuit of honours, nor of wealth, nor the allurements of a social career — but calmly balancing the advantages and the evils of

each course, whether of private life or of public — of retirement or of crowds, — and deciding on each, not according to abstract rules and vague maxims on the nothingness of fame, or the joys of solitude, but according to the peculiar bias and temper of our own minds. For toil to some is happiness, and rest to others. This man can only breathe in crowds, and that man only in solitude. Fame is necessary to the quiet of one nature, and is void of all attraction to another. Let each choose his career according to the dictates of his own breast — and this, not from the vulgar doctrine that our own happiness, as happiness only, is to be our being's end and aim (for in minds rightly and nobly constituted, there are aims *out* of ourselves, stronger than aught of self), but because a mind not at ease with itself finds it difficult to keep on very amiable terms with others. Happiness and Virtue re-act upon each other; the best are not only the happiest, but the happiest are usually the best. Drawn into pursuits, however estimable in themselves, from which our tastes and dispositions recoil, we are too apt to grow irritable, morose, and discontented with our kind. The genius that is roused by things at war with it too often becomes malignant, and retaliates upon men the wounds it receives from circumstance; but when we are engaged in that course of life which most harmonises with our individual bias, whether it be action or seclusion, literature or business, we

enjoy within us that calm which is the best atmosphere of the mind, and in which there is the likeliest chance of fruitage for the seeds that we sow by choice. Our sense of contentment makes us kindly and benevolent to others. We are fulfilling our proper destiny, and those around us feel the sunshine of our own hearts. It is for this reason that happiness should be our main object in the choice of life, *because* out of happiness springs that state of mind which becomes virtue: — and this should be remembered by those of generous and ardent dispositions who would immolate themselves for the supposed utility of others, plunging into a war of things for which their natures are unsuited. Among the few truths which Rousseau has left us, none is more true than this — "It is not permitted to a man to corrupt himself for the sake of mankind." We must be useful according, not to general theories, but to our individual capacities and habits. To be practical we must exercise ourselves in that vocation which our special qualities enable us to practise. Each star, shining in its appointed sphere, each — no matter what its magnitude or its gyration — contributes to the general light.

To different ages there are different virtues — the reckless generosity of the boy is a wanton folly in the man. At thirty there is no apology for the spendthrift. From that period to the verge of age, is the fitting season for a considerate foresight and

prudence in affairs. Approaching age itself we have less need of economy: and Nature recoils from the miser, caressing Mammon with one hand, while Death plucks him by the other. We should provide for our age, in order that our age may have no urgent wants of this world to abstract it from the meditations of the next. It is awful to see the lean hands of Dotage making a coffer of the grave! But while, with the departure of youth, we enter steadfastly into the great business of life, while our reason constructs its palaces from the ruins of our passions — while we settle into thoughtful, and resolute, and aspiring men — we should beware how, thus occupied by the world, the world grow "too much with us." It is a perilous age that of ambition and discretion — a perilous age that in which youth recedes from us — if we forget that the soul should cherish its own youth through eternity! It is precisely as we feel how feebly laws avail to make us good while they forbid us to be evil — it is precisely as our experience puts a check upon our impulses — it is precisely as we sigh to own how contaminating is example, that we should be on our guard over our own hearts — not, now, lest they err, but rather lest they harden. Now is the period when the affections can be easiest scared — when we can dispense the most with Love — when in the lustiness and hardihood of our golden prime we can best stand alone — remote alike from the romantic yearn-

ings of youth, and the clinging helplessness of age. Now is the time, when neither the voice of woman nor the smiles of children touch us as they did once, and may again. We are occupied, absorbed, wrapped in our schemes and our stern designs. The world is our mistress, our projects are our children. A man is startled when he is told this truth; let him consider, let him pause — if he be actively engaged (as few at that age are not), and ask himself if I wrong him? — if, insensibly and unconsciously, he has not retreated into the citadel of self? — Snail-like he walks the world, bearing about him his armour and retreat. Is not this to be guarded against? Does it not require our caution, lest caution itself block up the beautiful avenues of the heart? What can life give us if we sacrifice what is fairest in ourselves? What does experience profit, if it forbid us to be generous, to be noble — if it counterwork and blight the graces and the charities without which wisdom is harsh, and virtue has no music in her name? As Paley says, that we ought not to refuse alms too sternly from a fear that we encourage the idle, lest, on the other hand, we habituate the heart to a want of compassion for the distressed — so with the less vulgar sympathies shall we check the impulsive frankness, the kindly interpretation, the humane sensibility, which are the alms of the soul, because they may expose us to occasional deceit? Shall the error of softness justify the habits of ob-

duracy? — and lest we should suffer by the faults of others, shall we vitiate ourselves?

This, then, is the age in which, while experience becomes our guide, we should follow its dictates with a certain measured and jealous caution. We must remember how apt man is to extremes — rushing from credulity and weakness to suspicion and distrust. And still, if we are truly prudent, we shall cherish, despite occasional delusions, those noblest and happiest of our tendencies — to love and to confide.

I know not indeed a more beautiful spectacle in the world than an old man, who has gone with honour through all its storms and contests, and who retains to the last the freshness of feeling that adorned his youth. This is the true green old age — this makes a southern winter of declining years, in which the sunlight warms, though the heats are gone: ever welcome to the young is the old man who retains his sympathies with youth. They more than respect, they venerate him, for there is this distinction between respect and veneration, — veneration has always in it something of love.

This, too, is the age in which we ought calmly to take the fitting estimate of the opinions of the world. In youth we are too apt to despise, in maturity too inclined to overrate, the sentiments of others, and the silent influences of the public. It is right to fix the medium. Among the happiest and

proudest possessions of a man is his character — it is a wealth — it is a rank of itself. It usually procures him the honours and rarely the jealousies that attend on Fame. Like most treasures that are attained less by circumstances than ourselves, Character is a more felicitous possession than Glory. The wise man therefore despises not the opinion of the world — he estimates it at its full value — he does not wantonly jeopardise his treasure of a good name — he does not rush in self-conceit against the received sentiments of others — he does not hazard his costly jewel with unworthy combatants and for a petty stake. He respects the Legislation of Decorum. If he be benevolent, as well as wise, he will remember that Character affords him a thousand utilities — that it enables him the better to guide the erring and to shelter the assailed. But that Character is built on a false and hollow basis, which is formed not from the dictates of our own breast, but solely from the fear of censure. What is the essence and the life of Character? Principle, integrity, independence! — or, as one of our great old writers hath it, "that inbred loyalty unto Virtue which can serve her without a livery." These are qualities that hang not upon any man's breath. They must be formed within ourselves; they must *make ourselves* — indissoluble and indestructible as the soul! If, conscious of these possessions, we trust tranquilly to time and occasion to render them known, we may rest assured

that our character, sooner or later, will establish itself. We cannot more defeat our own object than by a restless and fevered anxiety as to what the world will say of us; except, indeed, if we are tempted to unworthy compliances with aught which our conscience disapproves, in order to win the fleeting and capricious countenance of the time. There is a moral honesty in a due regard for Character which will not shape itself to the humours of the crowd. And this, if honest, is no less wise: for the crowd never long esteems those who flatter it at their own expense. He who has the suppleness of the demagogue will live to complain of the fickleness of the mob.

If in early youth it be natural sometimes to brave and causelessly to affront opinion, so also it is natural, on the other hand, and not perhaps unamiable, for the milder order of spirits to incur the contrary extreme and stand in too great an awe of the voices of the world. They feel as if they had no right to be confident of their own judgment — they have not tested themselves by temptation and experience. They are willing to give way on points on which they are not assured. And it is a pleasant thing to prop their doubts on the stubborn asseverations of others. But in vigorous and tried manhood, we should be all in all to ourselves. Our own past and our own future should be our main guides. "He who is not a physician at thirty is a fool" —

a physician to his mind, as to his body, acquainted with his own moral constitution — its diseases, its remedies, its diet, its conduct. We should learn so to regulate our own thoughts and actions, that, while comprising the world, the world should not tyrannise over them. Take away the world, and we should think and act the same — a world to ourselves. Thus trained and thus accustomed, we can bear occasional reproach and momentary slander with little pain. The rough contact of the crowd presses upon no sore — the wrongs of the hour do not incense or sadden us. We rely upon ourselves and upon time. If I have rightly said that Principle is a main essence of Character, Principle is a thing we cannot change or shift. As it has been finely expressed, "Principle is a passion for truth," * — and as an earlier and homelier writer hath it, "The truths of God are the pillars of the world." ** The truths we believe in are the pillars of *our* world. The man who at thirty can be easily persuaded out of his own sense of right, is never respected after he has served a purpose. I do not know even if we do not think more highly of the intellectual uses of one who sells himself well, than of those of one who lends himself for nothing.

* Hazlitt.

** From a scarce and curious little tract called 'The Simple Cobbler of Aggavvam.' 1647.

Lastly, this seems to me, above all, an age which calls upon us to ponder well and thoughtfully upon the articles of our moral and our religious creed. Entering more than ever into the mighty warfare of the world, we should summon to our side whatever auxiliaries can aid us in the contest — to cheer, to comfort, to counsel, to direct. It is a time seriously to analyse the confused elements of Belief — to apply ourselves to such solution of our doubts as reason may afford us. Happy he who can shelter himself with confidence under the assurance of immortality, and feel "that the world is not an Inn but an Hospital — a place not to live but to die in," acknowledging "that piece of divinity that is in us — that something that was before the elements, and owes no homage to the sun." * For him there is indeed the mastery and the conquest, not only over death but over life; and "he forgets that he can die if he complain of misery!" **

I reject all sectarian intolerance — I affect no uncharitable jargon — frankly I confess that I have known many before whose virtues I bow down ashamed of my own errors, though they were not guided and supported by Belief. But I never met with one such, who did not own that while he would not have been worse, he would have been happier,

* 'Religio Medici,' Part II. sect. II.
** Ibid. Part I. sect. XLIV.

could he have believed. I, indeed, least of all men, ought harshly to search into that realm of opinion which no law can reach; for I, too, have had my interval of doubt, of despondency, of the Philosophy of the Garden. Perhaps there are many with whom Faith — the Saviour, — must lie awhile in darkness and the grave of unbelief, ere, immortal and immortalising, it ascend from its tomb — a God!

But humbly and reverently comparing each state with each, I exclaim again, "Happy, thrice happy, he who relies on the eternity of the soul — who believes, as the loved fall one after one from his side, that they have returned 'to their native country'"* — that they await the Divine re-union; — who feels that each treasure of knowledge he attains he carries with him through illimitable being — who sees in Virtue the essence and the element of the world he is to inherit, and to which he but accustoms himself betimes; who comforts his weariness amidst the storms of time, by seeing, far across the melancholy seas, the haven he will reach at last — who deems that every struggle has its assured reward, and every sorrow has its balm — who knows, however forsaken or bereaved below, that he never can be alone, and never be deserted — that above him is the protection of Eternal Power, and the mercy of Eternal Love! Ah, well said the dreamer

* Form of Chinese epitaphs.

of philosophy, "How much *He* knew of the human heart who first called God our Father!"

As, were our lives limited to a single year, and we had never beheld the flower that perishes from the earth restored by the dawning spring, we might doubt the philosophy that told us it was not dead, but dormant only for a time; yet, to continue existence to another season, would be to know that the seeming miracle was but the course of nature; — even so, this life is to eternity but as a single revolution of the sun, in which we close our views with the winter of the soul, when its leaves fade and vanish, and it seems outwardly to rot away: but the seasons roll on unceasingly over the barrenness of the grave — and those who, above, have continued the lease of life, behold the imperishable flower burst forth into the second spring!

This hope makes the dignity of man, nor can I conceive how he who feels it breathing its exalted eloquence through his heart, can be deliberately guilty of one sordid action, or wilfully brood over one base desire.

THE WORLD AS IT IS.

"WHAT a delightful thing the world is! Lady Lennox's ball, last night — how charming it was! — every one so kind, and Charlotte looking so pretty — the nicest girl I ever saw! But I must dress now. Balfour is to be here at twelve with the horse he wants to sell me. How lucky I am to have such a friend as Balfour! — so entertaining — so good-natured — so clever too — and such an excellent heart! Ah! how unlucky! it rains a little: but never mind, it will clear up; and if it don't — why one can play at billiards. What a delightful thing the world is!"

So soliloquised Charles Nugent, a man of twenty-one — a philanthropist — an optimist. Our young gentleman was an orphan, of good family and large fortune; brave, generous, confiding, and open-hearted. His ability was above the ordinary standard, and he had a warm love and a pure taste for letters. He had even bent a knee to Philosophy, but the calm and old graces with which the goddess receives her servants had soon discontented the young votary

with the worship. "Away!" cried he, one morning, flinging aside the volume of Rochefoucauld, which he had fancied he understood; "Away with this selfish and debasing code! — men are not the mean things they are here described — be it mine to think well of my kind!" Oh, ruthless Experience, since we must all pass through thy school, why dost thou exact from us so heavy an entrance-fee? Why must we be robbed of so many amiable sentiments before thou wilt deign to instruct us in the first rudiments of thy compulsory education?

"Ha! my dear Nugent, how are you?" and Captain Balfour enters the room; a fine dark, handsome fellow, with something of pretention in his air and a great deal of frankness in his accost. "And here is the horse. Come to the window. Does he not step finely? What action! Do you remark his fore-hand? How he carries his tail! Gad, I don't think you shall have him, after all!"

"Nay, my dear fellow, you may well be sorry to part with him. He is superb! Quite sound — eh?"

"Have him examined."

"Do you think I would not take your word for it? The price?"

"Fix it yourself. Prince Paul once offered me a hundred and eighty; but to you — say a hundred and fifty."

"I'll not be outdone by Prince Paul — there's a cheque for a hundred and eighty guineas."

"Upon my soul, I'm ashamed: but you are such a rich fellow. John, take the horse to Mr. Nugent's stables. Where will you dine to-day — at the Cocoa-tree?"

"With all my heart."

The young men rode together. Nugent was delighted with his new purchase. They dined at the Cocoa-tree. Balfour ordered some early peaches. Nugent paid the bill. They went to the Opera.

"Do you see that *figurante*, Florine?" asked Balfour. "Pretty ankle — eh?"

"Yes, *comme ça* — but dances awkwardly — not handsome."

"What! not handsome? Come and talk to her. She's more admired than any girl on the stage."

They went behind the scenes, and Balfour convinced his friend that he ought to be enchanted with Florine. Before the week was out the *figurante* kept her carriage, and in return, Nugent supped with her twice a-week.

Nugent had written a tale for "The Keepsake;" it was his first literary effort; it was tolerably good, and exceedingly popular. One day he was lounging over his breakfast, and a tall, thin gentleman, in black, was announced, by the name of Mr. Gilpin.

Mr. Gilpin made a most respectful bow, and heaved a peculiarly profound sigh. Nugent was in-

stantly seized with a lively interest in the stranger. "Sir, it is with great regret," faltered forth Mr. Gilpin, "that I seek you — I — I — I —" A low, consumptive cough checked his speech. Nugent offered him a cup of tea. The civility was refused, and the story continued.

Mr. Gilpin's narration is soon told, when he himself is not the narrator. An unfortunate literary man — once in affluent circumstances — security for a treacherous friend — friend absconded — pressure of unforeseen circumstances — angel wife and four cherub children — a book coming out next season — deep distress at present — horror at being forced to beg — forcibly struck by generous sentiments expressed in the tale written by Mr. Nugent — a ray of hope broke on his mind — and *voilà* the causes of Mr. Gilpin's distress and Mr. Gilpin's visit. Never was there a more interesting personification of the afflicted man of letters than Gregory Gilpin. He looked pale, patient, and respectable; he coughed frequently, and he was dressed in deep mourning. Nugent's heart swelled — he placed a bank-note in Mr. Gilpin's hands — he promised more effectual relief, and Mr. Gilpin retired, overpowered with his own gratitude and Mr. Nugent's respectful compassion.

"How happy I am to be rich!" said the generous young philanthropist, throwing open his chest.

Nugent went to a *conversazione* at Lady Len-

nox's. Her ladyship was a widow, and a charming woman. She was a little of the blue, and a little of the fine lady, and a little of the beauty, and a little of the coquette, and a great deal of the sentimentalist. She had one daughter, without a shilling; she had taken a warm interest in a young man of the remarkable talents and singular amiability of Charles Nugent. He sat next to her — they talked of the heartlessness of the world: it is a subject on which men of twenty-one and ladies of forty-five are especially eloquent. Lady Lennox complained, Mr. Nugent defended. "One does not talk much of innocence," it is said, or something like it is said, somewhere in Madame d'Epinay's Memoirs, "without being sadly corrupted;" and nothing brings out the goodness of our own hearts more than a charge against the heartlessness of others.

"An excellent woman!" thought Nugent; "what warm feelings! — how pretty her daughter is! Oh! a charming family!"

Charlotte Lennox played an affecting air; Nugent leaned over the piano; they talked about music, poetry, going on the water, sentiment, and Richmond Hill. They made up a party of pleasure. Nugent did not sleep well that night — he was certainly in love.

When he rose the next morning, the day was bright and fine; Balfour, the best of friends, was to be with him in an hour; Balfour's horse, the best

of horses, was to convey him to Richmond; and at Richmond he was to meet Lady Lennox, the most agreeable of mothers — and Charlotte, the most enchanting of daughters. The *figurante* had always been a bore — she was now forgotten. "It certainly is a delightful world!" repeated Nugent, as he tied his neckcloth.

It is some time — I will not say how long — after the date of this happy day; Nugent is alone in his apartment, and walking to and fro — his arms folded, and a frown upon his brow. "What a rascal! what a mean wretch! — and the horse was lame when he sold it — not worth ten pounds! — and I so confiding — *That*, however, I should not mind; but to have saddled me with his cast-off mistress! — to make me the laughing-stock of the world! By heavens, he shall repent it! Borrowed money of me, then made a jest of my goodnature — introduced me to his club, in order to pillage me! — but, thank Heaven, I can shoot him yet! Ha! Colonel; this is kind!"

Colonel Nelmore, an elderly gentleman, well known in society, with a fine forehead, a shrewd, contemplative eye, and an agreeable address, entered the room. To him Nugent communicated the long list of his grievances, and concluded by begging him to convey a challenge to the best of friends — Captain Balfour. The colonel raised his eyebrows.

"But, — my dear Charles, — this gentleman

has certainly behaved ill to you, I allow it — but for what specific offence do you mean to challenge him?"

"For his conduct in general."

The colonel laughed.

"For saying yesterday, then, that I was grown a bore, and he should cut me in future. He told Selwyn so in the bay-window at White's."

The colonel took snuff.

"My good young friend," said he, "I see you don't know the world. Come and dine with me to-day — a punctual seven. We'll talk over these matters. Meanwhile, you can't challenge a man for calling you a bore."

"Not challenge him! — what should I do, then?"

"Laugh — shake your head at him, and say — Ah! Balfour, you're a sad fellow!"

The colonel succeeded in preventing the challenge, but Nugent's indignation at the best of friends remained as warm as ever. He declined the colonel's invitation — he was to dine with the Lennoxes. Meanwhile, he went to the shady part of Kensington Gardens to indulge his reflections.

He sat himself down in an arbour, and looked moralisingly over the initials, the dates, and the witticisms, that hands, long since mouldered, have consigned to the admiration of posterity.

A gay party were strolling by this retreat —

their laughter and their voices preceded them. "Yes," said a sharp, dry voice, which Nugent recognised as belonging to one of the wits of the day — "Yes, I saw you, Lady Lennox, talking sentiment to Nugent — fie! how could you waste your time so unprofitably!"

"Ah! poor young man! he is certainly *bien bête*, with his fine phrases: but 'tis a good creature on the whole, and exceedingly useful!"

"Useful!"

"Yes; fills up a vacant place at one's table, at a day's warning; lends me his carriage-horses when mine have caught cold; subscribes to my charities for me; and supplies my balconies with flowers. In a word, if he were more sensible, he would be less agreeable: his sole charm is in his foibles."

What a description by the most sentimental of mothers, of the most interesting of young men! Nugent was thunderstruck; the party swept by; he was undiscovered.

He raved, he swore, he was furious. He go to the dinner to-day! No, he would write such a letter to the lady — it should speak daggers! But the daughter: Charlotte was not of the party. Charlotte — oh! Charlotte was quite a different creature from her mother — the most natural, the most simple of human beings, and evidently loved him. He could not be mistaken there. Yes, for her sake he would

go to the dinner: he would smother his just resentment.

He went to Lady Lennox's. It was a large party. The young Marquess of Austerly had just returned from his travels. He was sitting next to the most lovely of daughters. Nugent was forgotten.

After dinner, however, he found an opportunity to say a few words in a whisper to Charlotte. He hinted a tender reproach, and he begged her to sing, "*We met; 'twas in a crowd.*" Charlotte was hoarse — had caught cold. Charlotte could not sing. Nugent left the room, and the house. When he got to the end of the street, he discovered that he had left his cane behind. He went back for it, glad (for he was really in love) of an excuse for darting an angry glance at the most simple, the most natural of human beings, that should prevent her sleeping the whole night. He ascended the drawing-room; and Charlotte was delighting the Marquess of Austerly, who leaned over her chair, with "*We met; 'twas in a crowd.*"

Charlotte Lennox was young, lovely, and artful. Lord Austerly was young, inexperienced, and vain. In less than a month, his lordship proposed, and was accepted.

"Well, well!" said poor Nugent one morning, breaking from a reverie; "betrayed in my friendship, deceived in my love, the pleasure of doing

good is still left to me. Friendship quits us at the first stage of life, Love at the second, Benevolence lasts till death! Poor Gilpin! how grateful he is! I must see if I can get him that place abroad." To amuse his thoughts, he took up a new magazine. He opened the page at a violent attack on himself — on his beautiful tale in the 'Keepsake.' The satire was not confined to the work; it extended to the author. He was a fop, a coxcomb, a ninny, an intellectual dwarf, a miserable creature, and an abortion! These are pleasant studies for a man out of spirits, especially before he is used to them. Nugent had just flung the magazine to the other end of the room, when his lawyer came to arrange matters about a mortgage, which the generous Nugent had already been forced to raise on his estates. The lawyer was a pleasant, entertaining man of the world, accustomed to the society, for he was accustomed to the wants, of young men. He perceived that Nugent was a little out of humour. He attributed the cause, naturally enough, to the mortgage; and to divert his thoughts, he entered first on a general conversation.

"What rogues there are in the world!" said he. Nugent groaned. "This morning, for instance, before I came to you, I was engaged in a very curious piece of business. A gentleman gave his son-in-law a qualification to stand for a borough: the son-in-law kept the deed, and so cheated the good gentleman

out of more than three hundred pounds a-year. Yesterday I was employed against a fraudulent bankrupt — such an instance of long, premeditated, cold-hearted, deliberate rascality! And when I leave you, I must see what is to be done with a literary swindler, who, on the strength of a consumptive cough, and a suit of black, has been respectably living on compassion for the last two years."

"Ha!"

"He has just committed the most nefarious fraud — a forgery, in short, on his own uncle, who has twice seriously distressed himself to save the rogue of a nephew, and who must now submit to this loss, or proclaim, by a criminal prosecution, the disgrace of his own family. The nephew proceeded, of course, on his knowledge of my client's goodness of heart; and thus a man suffers in proportion to his amiability."

"Is his name Gil — Gil — Gilpin?" stammered Nugent.

"The same! O-ho! have you been bit, too, Mr. Nugent?"

Before our hero could answer, a letter was brought to him. Nugent broke the seal; it was from the editor of the magazine in which he had just read his own condemnation. It ran thus:

"Sir, — Having been absent from London on unavoidable business for the last month, and the

care of the —— Magazine having thereby devolved on another, who has very ill discharged its duties, I had the surprise and mortification of perceiving, on my return this day, that a most unwarrantable and personal attack upon you has been admitted in the number for this month. I cannot sufficiently express my regret, the more especially on finding that the article in question was written by a mere mercenary in letters. To convince you of my concern, and my resolution to guard against such unworthy proceedings in future, I enclose you another and yet severer attack, which was sent to us for our next number, and for which, I grieve to say, the unprincipled author has already succeeded in obtaining from the proprietor — a remuneration. I have the honour to be, Sir," &c. &c. &c.

Nugent's eyes fell on the enclosed paper: it was in the handwriting of Mr. Gregory Gilpin, the most grateful of distressed literary men.

"You seem melancholy to-day, my dear Nugent," said Colonel Nelmore, as he met his young friend walking with downcast eyes in the old mall of St. James's Park.

"I am unhappy, I am discontented, — the gloss is faded from life," answered Nugent, sighing.

"I love meeting with a pensive man," said the colonel: "let me join you, and let us dine together,

tête-à-tête, at my bachelor's table. You refused me some time ago; may I be more fortunate now?"

"I shall be but poor company," rejoined Nugent; "but I am very much obliged to you, and I accept your invitation with pleasure."

Colonel Nelmore was a man who had told some fifty years. He had known misfortune in his day, and he had seen a great deal of the harsh realities of life. But he had not suffered nor lived in vain. He was no theorist, and did not affect the philosopher; but he was contented with a small fortune, popular with retired habits, observant with a love for study, and, above all, he did a great deal of general good, exactly because he embraced no particular system.

"Yes," said Nugent, as they sat together after dinner, and the younger man had revealed to the elder, who had been his father's intimate friend, all that had seemed to him the most unexampled of misfortunes — after he had repeated the perfidy of Balfour, the faithlessness of Charlotte, and the ingratitude of Gilpin — "Yes," said he, "I now see my error; I no longer love my species; I no longer place reliance in the love, friendship, sincerity, or virtue of the world; I will no longer trust myself open-hearted in this vast community of knaves: I will not fly mankind, but I will despise them."

The colonel smiled. "You shall put on your hat, my young friend, and pay a little visit with me: —

nay, no excuse: it is only to an old lady, who has given me permission to drink tea with her." Nugent demurred, but consented. The two gentlemen walked to a small house in the Regent's Park. They were admitted to a drawing-room, where they found a blind old lady, of a cheerful countenance, and prepossessing manners.

"And how does your son do?" asked the colonel, after the first salutations were over; "have you seen him lately?"

"Seen him lately! why you know he rarely lets a day pass without calling on, or writing to me. Since the affliction which visited me with blindness, though he has nothing to hope from me, though from my jointure I must necessarily be a burthen to one of his limited income and mixing so much with the world as he does; yet had I been the richest mother in England, and everything at my own disposal, he could not have been more attentive, more kind to me. He will cheerfully give up the gayest party to come and read to me, if I am the least unwell, or the least out of spirits; and he sold his horses to pay Miss Blandly, since I could not afford from my own income to pay the salary which so accomplished a musician asked to become my companion. Music, you know, is now my chief luxury. Oh, he is a paragon of sons — the world think him dissipated and heartless; but if they could see how tender he is to me!" exclaimed the mother, clasping her hands,

as the tears gushed from her eyes. Nugent was charmed: the colonel encouraged the lady to proceed; and Nugent thought he had never passed a more agreeable hour than in listening to her maternal praises of her affectionate son.

"Ah, colonel!" said he, as they left the house, "how much wiser have you been than myself; you have selected your friends with discretion. What would I give to possess such a friend as that good son must be! But you never told me the lady's name."

"Patience," said the colonel, taking snuff; "I have another visit to pay."

Nelmore turned down a little alley, and knocked at a small cottage. A woman with a child at her breast opened the door; and Nugent stood in one of those scenes of cheerful poverty which it so satisfies the complacency of the rich to behold.

"Aha!" said Nelmore, looking round, "you seem comfortable enough now; your benefactor has not done his work by halves."

"Blessings on his heart, no! Oh! sir, when I think how distressed he is himself, how often he has been put to it for money, how calumniated he is by the world, I cannot say how grateful I am, how grateful I ought to be. He has robbed himself to feed us, and merely because he knew my husband in youth."

The colonel permitted the woman to run on.

Nugent wiped his eyes, and left his purse behind him. "Who is this admirable, this self-denying-man?" cried he, when they were once more in the street. "He is in distress himself — would that I could relieve him! Ah, you already reconcile me to the world. I acknowledge your motive in leading me hither; there are good men as well as bad. All are not Balfours and Gilpins! But the name — the name of these poor people's benefactor!"

"Stay," said the colonel, as they now entered Oxford Street; "this is lucky indeed, I see a good lady whom I wish to accost. Well, Mrs. Johnson," addressing a stout, comely, middle-aged woman of respectable appearance, who, with a basket on her arm, was coming out of an oil-shop; "so you have been labouring in your vocation I see — making household purchases. And how is your young lady?"

"Very well, sir, I am happy to say," replied the old woman, curtsying. "And you are well too, I hope, sir?"

"Yes, considering the dissipation of the long season, pretty well, thank you. But I suppose your young mistress is as gay and heartless as ever — a mere fashionable wife, eh?"

"Sir!" said the woman, bridling up, "there is not a better lady in the world than my young lady; I have known her since she was that high!"

"What, she's good-tempered, I suppose?" said the colonel sneering.

"Good-tempered! I believe it is impossible for her to say a harsh word to any one. There never was so mild, so even-like a temper."

"What, and not heartless? eh! this is too good!"

"Heartless! she nursed me herself when I broke my leg by a fall; and every night before she went out to any party, she would come into my room with her sweet smile, and see if I wanted any thing."

"And you fancy, Mrs. Johnson, that she'll make a good wife: why she was not much in love when she married."

"I don't know as to that, sir, whether she was or not; but I'm sure she is always studying my lord's wishes, and I heard him say this very morning to his brother — 'Arthur, if you knew what a treasure I possess!'"

"You are very right," said the colonel, resuming his natural manner: "and I only spoke for the pleasure of seeing how well and how justly you could defend your mistress; she is, truly, an excellent lady — good evening to you."

"I have seen that woman before," said Nugent, "but I can't think where; she has the appearance of being a housekeeper in some family."

"She is so."

"How pleasant it is to hear of female excellence in the great world!" continued Nugent, sighing; "it was evident to see that the honest servant was

sincere in her praise. Happy husband, whoever he may be!"

They were now at the colonel's house. "Just let me read this passage," said Nelmore, opening the pages of a French Philosopher; and as I do not pronounce French like a native, I will translate as I proceed: —

"'In order to love mankind — expect but little from them; in order to view their faults, without bitterness, we must accustom ourselves to pardon them, and to perceive that indulgence is a justice which frail humanity has a right to demand from wisdom. Now, nothing tends more to dispose us to indulgence, to close our hearts against hatred, to open them to the principles of a humane and soft morality, than a profound knowledge of the human heart. Accordingly, the wisest men have always been the most indulgent,' &c.

"And now prepare to be surprised. That good son whom you admired so much, whom you wished you could obtain as a friend, is Captain Balfour; that generous, self-denying man, whom you desired so nobly to relieve, is Mr. Gilpin; that young lady who, in the flush of health, beauty, dissipation, and conquest, could attend the sick chamber of her servant, and whom her husband discovers to be a treasure, is Charlotte Lennox!"

"Good Heavens!" cried Nugent, "what then am I to believe? Has some juggling been practised on

my understanding? and are Balfour, Gilpin, and Miss Lennox, after all, patterns of perfection?"

"No, indeed, very far from it: Balfour is a dissipated, reckless man — of loose morality and a low standard of honour: he saw you were destined to purchase experience — he saw you were destined to be plundered by some one — he thought he might as well be a candidate for the profit. He laughed afterwards at your expense, not because he despised you; on the contrary, I believe that he liked you very much in his way; but because, in the world he frequents, every man enjoys a laugh at his acquaintance. Charlotte Lennox saw in you a desirable match; nay, I believe she had a positive regard for you; but she had been taught all her life to think equipage, wealth, and station better than love. She could not resist the temptation of being Marchioness of Austerly — not one girl in twenty could resist it; yet she is not on that account the less good-tempered, good-natured, nor the less likely to be a good mistress and a tolerable wife. Gilpin is the worst instance of the three. Gilpin is an evident scoundrel; but Gilpin is in evident distress. He was, in all probability, very sorry to attack you who had benefited him so largely; but perhaps, as he is a dull dog, the only thing the magazines would buy of him was abuse. You must not think he maligned you out of malice, out of ingratitude, out of wantonness; he maligned you for ten guineas. Yet Gilpin is a

man, who, having swindled his father out of ten guineas, would in the joy of the moment give five to a beggar. In the present case he was actuated by a better feeling: he was serving the friend of his childhood — few men forget those youthful ties, however they break through others. Your mistake was not the single mistake of supposing the worst people to be the best — it was the double mistake of supposing commonplace people now the best — now the worst; in making what might have been a pleasant acquaintance an intimate friend; in believing a man in distress must necessarily be a man of merit; in thinking a good-tempered, pretty girl, was an exalted specimen of human nature. You were then about to fall into the opposite extreme — and to be as indiscriminating in suspicion as you were in credulity. Would that I could flatter myself that I had saved you from that — the more dangerous — error of the two!"

"You have, my dear Nelmore; and now lend me your Philosopher!"

"With pleasure; but one short maxim is as good as all philosophers can teach you, for philosophers can only enlarge on it: it is simple — it is this — 'TAKE THE WORLD AS IT IS!'"

KNEBWORTH.

THE English arrogate to themselves the peculiar attachment to Home — the national conviction of the sacredness of its serene asylum. But Home was a name not less venerable in the ideas of the ancient Romans: not less by them was the hospitable hearth deemed the centre of unspeakable enjoyments — their gayest poets linger on its attractions — the house was a temple that had its secret penetralia, which no uninitiated stranger might profane with unbidden presence; the household gods were their especial deities, the most familiarly invoked, the most piously preserved. And a beautiful superstition it was, that of the household gods; — a beautiful notion that our ancestors, for us at least, were divine, and presided with unforgetful tenderness over the scene wherein their life on earth has known its happiest emotions, and its most tranquil joys. A similar worship is not only to be traced to the eldest times, beyond the date of the civilized races that we popularly call "the Ancients," but is yet to be found cherished among savage tribes. It is one of the universal proofs how little death can conquer the affections.

But with us are required no fond idolatries of outward images. We bear our Penates with us abroad as at home, their atrium is the heart. Our household gods are the memories of our childhood — the recollections of the hearth round which we gathered — of the fostering hands which caressed us — of the scene of all the cares and joys — the anxieties and the hopes — the ineffable yearnings of love, which made us first acquainted with the mystery and the sanctity of Home. I was touched once in visiting an Irish cabin, which, in the spirit of condescending kindness, the Lady Bountiful of the place had transformed into the graceful neatness of an English cottage, training roses up the wall, glazing the windows, and boarding the mud floor; — I was touched by the homely truth which the poor peasant uttered as he gazed, half gratefully, half indignantly, on the change. "It is all very kind," said he, in his dialect, which I am obliged to translate; "but the good lady does not know how dear to a poor man is every thing that reminds him of the time when he played instead of working — these great folks do not understand us." It was quite true: on that mud floor the child had played; round that hearth, with its eternal smoke, which now admitted, through strange casements, the uncomfortable daylight, he had sat jesting with the kind hearts that beat no more. These new comforts saddened and perplexed him — not because they were comforts, but because they were new.

They had not the associations of his childhood; the great folks did not understand him; they despised his indifference to greater luxuries. Alas! they did not perceive that in that indifference there was all the poetry of sentiment. The good lady herself dwelt in an old-fashioned, inconvenient mansion. Suppose some oppressive benefactor had converted its dingy rooms and dreary galleries into a modern, well-proportioned, and ungenially cheerful residence, would she have been pleased? Would she not have missed the nursery she had played in? — the little parlour by whose hearth she could yet recall to fancy the face of her mother long gone? — Would ottomans and mirrors supply the place of the old worm-eaten chair from which her father, on Sabbath nights, had given forth the holy lecture? — or the little discoloured glass in which thirty years ago, she had marked her own maiden blushes, when some dear name was suddenly spoken? No, her old paternal house, rude though it be, is dearer to her than a new palace; can she not conceive that the same feelings may make "the hut to which his soul conforms," dearer to the peasant than the new residence which is as a palace to him? Why should that be a noble and tender sentiment in the rich, which is scorned as a brutal apathy in the poor? The peasant was right — "Great folks did not understand him!"

Amidst the active labours, in which, from my

earliest youth, I have been plunged, one of the greatest luxuries I know is to return, for short intervals, to the place in which the happiest days of my childhood glided away. It is an old manorial seat that belongs to my mother, the heiress of its former lords. The house, formerly of vast extent, built round a quadrangle, at different periods, from the date of the second crusade to that of the reign of Elizabeth, was in so ruinous a condition when she came to its possession, that three sides of it were obliged to be pulled down: the fourth yet remaining, is in itself a house larger than most in the county, and still contains the old oak hall, with its lofty ceiling and raised music-gallery. The park has something of the character of Penshurst, — and its venerable avenues, which slope from the house down the gradual declivity, giving wide views of the opposite hills crowned with some distant spire, impart to the scene that peculiarly English, half stately, and wholly cultivated, character upon which the poets of Elizabeth's day so much loved to linger. As is often the case with similar residences, the church stands in the park, at a bow-shot from the house, and formerly the walls of the outer court nearly reached the green sanctuary that surrounds the sacred edifice. The church itself, dedicated anciently to St. Mary, is worn and grey, in the simplest architecture of the Ecclesiastical Gothic; and, standing on the brow of the hill, its single tower at a distance blends with the

turrets of the house, — so that the two seem one pile. Beyond, to the right, half-way down the hill, and neighboured by a dell belted with trees, is an octagon building erected by the present owner for the mausoleum of the family. Fenced from the deer, is a small surrounding space sown with flowers — those fairest children of the earth, which the custom of all ages has dedicated to the dead. The modernness of this building, which contrasts those in its vicinity, seems to me, from that contrast, to make its object more impressive. It stands out alone, in the venerable landscape with its immemorial hills and trees — the prototype of the thought of death — a thing that dating with the living generation, admonishes them of their recent lease and its hastening end. For with all our boasted antiquity of race, we ourselves, — we mankind, — are the ephemera of the soil, and bear the truest relation, so far as our mortality is concerned, with that which is least old.

The most regular and majestic of the avenues I have described conducts to a sheet of water, that lies towards the extremity of the park. It is but small in proportion to the demesnes, but is clear and deep, and, fed by some subterraneous stream, its tide is fresh and strong beyond its dimensions. On its opposite bank is a small fishing-cottage, whitely peeping from a thick and gloomy copse of firs and oaks, through which shine, here and there, the red

berries of the mountain-ash; and behind this, on the other side of the brown, moss-grown deer-paling, is a wood of considerable extent. This, the farther bank of the water, is my favourite spot. Here, when a boy, I used to while away whole holydays, basking indolently in the noon of summer, and building castles in that cloudless air, until the setting of the sun.

The reeds then grew up, long and darkly green, along the margin; and though they have since yielded to the innovating scythe, and I hear the wind no longer glide and sigh amidst those earliest tubes of music, yet the whole sod is still fragrant, from spring to autumn, with innumerable heaths and wild flowers, and the crushed odours of the sweet thyme. And never have I seen a spot which the butterfly more loves to haunt, particularly that small fairy, blue-winged species which is tamer than the rest, and seems almost to invite you to admire it — throwing itself on the child's mercy as the robin upon man's. The varieties of the dragon-fly, glittering in the sun, dart ever through the boughs and along the water. It is a world which the fairest of the insect race seem to have made their own. There is something in the hum and stir of a summer noon, which is inexpressibly attractive to the dreams of the imagination. It fills us with a sense of life, but a life not our own — it is the exuberance of creation itself that overflows around us. Man is absent, but

life is present. Who has not spent hours in some such spot, cherishing dreams that have no connexion with the earth, and courting with half-shut eyes the images of the Ideal?

Stretched on the odorous grass, I see on the opposite shore the quiet church, where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep" — that mausoleum where my own dust shall rest at last, and the turrets of my childhood's home. All so solitary and yet so eloquent! Now the fern waves on the slope, and the deer comes forth, marching with his stately step to the water-side to pause and drink. O Nymphs! — O Fairies! — O Poetry, I am yours again!

I do not know how it is, but every year that I visit these scenes I have more need of their solace. My departed youth rises before me in more wan and melancholy hues, and the past saddens me more deeply with the present. Yet every year, perhaps, has been a stepping-stone in the ambition of my boyhood, and brought me nearer to the objects of my early dreams. It is not the mind that has been disappointed, it is the heart. What ties are broken — what affections marred! the Egeria of my hopes, — no cell conceals, no spell can invoke her now! Every pausing-place in the life of the ambitious is marked alike by the trophy and the tomb. But unambitious men have the tomb without the trophy!

It is a small, and sequestered, and primitive vil-

lage, that of Knebworth, though but thirty miles from London; consisting of scattered cottages, with here and there a broad green patch of waste land before the doors; and one side of the verdant lane, which makes the principal street, is skirted by the palings of the park. The steward's house, and the clergyman's, are the only ones — (save the manor-house itself) — aspiring to gentility. And here, nevertheless, did Dame Nature find her varieties — many were they and duly contrasted, when first, in the boundless sociability of childhood, we courted the friendship of every villager. The sturdy keeper, a stalwart man and a burly, whose name was an heir-loom on the estates; and who, many years afterwards, under another master, perished in a memorable fray with the implacable poachers; — the simple, horn-eyed idiot basking before the gardener's door, where he lodged — a privileged pensioner, sitting hour after hour, from sunrise to sunset — what marvels did not that strange passive existence create in us — the young, the buoyant, the impetuous! how we used to gather round him, and gaze, and wonder how he could pass his time without either work or play! — the one patriarch beggar of the place, who seemed to beg from vanity not from want; for, as he doffed his hat, his long snow-white locks fell, parted on either side, down features of apostolic beauty — and many an artist had paused to sketch the venerable head; — the single Lais of the place, stout and sturdy, with high

cheekbones and tempting smile, ill-favoured enough, it is true, but boasting her admirers: — the genius, too, of the village — a woman with but one hand, who could turn that hand to anything; nominally presiding over the dairy, she was equally apt at all the other affairs of the public life of a village. — Dogs, cows, horses, — none might be ill or well without her august permission; in every quarrel she was witness, jury, and judge. Never had any one more entirely the genius of action: she was always in everything, and at the head of everything — mixing, it is true, with all her energy and arts, a wonderful fidelity and spirit of clanship towards her employer. Tall, dark, and muscular, was she; a kind of caught-and-tamed Meg Merrilies!

But our two especial friends were an old couple, quartered in a little angle of the village, who, hard on their eightieth year, had jogged on, for nearly sixty revolutions of the sun, hand in hand together, and never seemed to have stumbled on an unkind thought towards each other. The love of those two old persons was the most perfect, the most beautiful I ever beheld. Their children had married and grown up and left them — they were utterly alone. Their simple affections were all in all to them. They had never been to London, nor, the woman at least, above fifteen miles from the humble spot where they had been born, and where their bones were to repose. Them the march of knowledge had never

reached. They could neither read nor write. Old Age had frozen up the portals of their intellect before the schoolmaster had gone his rounds. So ignorant were they of the world, that they scarce knew the name of the king. Changes of ministry, peace and war, the agitations of life, were as utter nothings to them as to the wildest savage of Caffraria. Few, as the arithmetic of intellect can comprise, were their ideas; but they wanted not to swell the sum, for the ideas were centred, with all that the true sentiment of love ever taught the wisest, within each other. If out of that circle extended their radii of love, it was to the family under whom they had vegetated, and to us who were its young hopes. Us indeed they did love warmly, as something that belonged to them. And scarcely a day ever passed — but what, in all the riot and glee of boyhood, with half-a-score of dogs at our heels — we used to rush into the quiet of that lonely cottage — scrambling over the palings — bustling through the threshold — sullying with shoes that had made a day's circuit through all the woods and plantings, the scrupulous cleanliness of the hearth, and making their old hearts glad, and proud, and merry, by the very discomfort we occasioned. Then were the rude chairs drawn into the jaws of that wide ingle nook — then was the fresh log thrown on the hearth — then would the old dame insist upon chafing our hands, numbed with the cold, as one of

us — ah, happiest he! — drew forth the fragment of cake, or the handful of figs and raisins — brought to show that they had not been forgotten. And, indeed, never were they forgotten by a more powerful hand and a more steady heart than ours, for daily from the hall came the savoury meal, which the old woman carved tenderly for her husband (for his hands were palsied), and, until his appetite was sated, sat apart and refused to share. Old Age, so seldom unselfish! — and the old age of the poor peasant-woman, how many young hearts, full of the phrases of poetry and the mockeries of sentiment, would it have shamed!

I see the old man now in a great high-backed tapestry chair, which had been a part of the furniture of the old manor house: in his youth he had served in the sporting establishment of a former squire, my grandfather's predecessor and uncle, and he had contrived to retain still, fresh and undimmed, through how many years time might forget to register, a habit of green velvet, whose antiquated cut suited well his long grey locks and venerable countenance. Poor Newman Hagar! a blessing on that old head — surely you are living yet! — while I live, you are not all vanished — all swallowed up by the oblivious earth. And, even after I have joined you, perhaps this page, surviving both, shall preserve you among those whom the world does not willingly let perish! And on the opposite side of

the hearth sat the partner of that obscure and harmless existence, with a face which, when *we* were there, never was without a smile at our presence, nor a tear for our parting. Plain though her features must ever have been, and worn and wrinkled as they were then, I never saw a countenance in which not the intellect, but the feeling of our divine nature, had left a more pleasant and touching trace.

Sometimes, as the winter day closed in, and dogs and children crowded alike round the comfortable fire, we delighted to make the old man tell us of his dim memories of former squires — the notes of bugles long silenced — the glories of coaches and six long vanished — how the squire was dressed in scarlet and gold — and how my lady swept the avenues in brocade. But pleasanter to me, child as I was, was it to question the good old folks of their own past fortunes — of their first love, and how they came to marry, and how, since, they had weathered the winds of the changing world.

"And I dare say you have scolded your wife very often, Newman," said I once; Old Newman looked down, and the wife took up the reply.

"Never to signify — and if he has, I deserved it."

"And I dare say, if the truth were told, you have scolded him quite as often."

"Nay," said the old woman, with a beauty of kindness which all the poetry in the world cannot

excel, "how can a wife scold her good man, who has been working for her and her little ones all the day? It may be for a man to be peevish, for it is he who bears the crosses of the world; but who should make him forget them but his own wife? And she had best, for her own sake — for nobody can scold much when the scolding is only on one side."

Who taught this poor woman her wisdom of love? Something less common than ordinary nature, something better than mere womanhood. For, verily, there are few out of novels to whom either nature or womanhood hath communicated a similar secret!

And we grew up from children to boys — from boyhood to youth. And old Hagar died — he died during my absence; and, when I returned, I called at the old woman's solitary house; I opened the latch; there she sat by the hearth with dull lack-lustre eyes. And Newman's high-backed chair was opposite in the accustomed place, and the green velvet habit was folded carefully on the seat. Poor old woman! her pleasure at seeing me could be revived no more. She was past all pleasure. Year after year time had essayed in vain to numb her gentle feelings and kindly sympathies: but one single hour — which had taken from her side its helpmate — had done the allotted task. Newman was dead — and the widow could feel no more. She lived on — but it was clockwork. She did not seem to

mourn for him, but rather to be grown indifferent to everything else. Once only I saw her weep — it was when, out of compassion for her solitary age, we wished to place a companion — a nurse in the cottage. "The sooner I'm dead the better," she said. "How can I bear to see a strange face where the old man used to sit?"

It is over now, the broken bridge is past; they are again united. If I were an Atheist for myself I would still pray that there might be a heaven for the poor! It may be said, indeed, that even in this world the poor are as happy as the rich, and the ignorant more contented than the wise. Possibly it may be so — yet, while all the disparities in human condition, which need another world for solution of the riddles in this, come from the efforts of men to gain riches and knowledge, no man who has known riches covets a return to poverty — no man who has tasted knowledge desires to regain the content of ignorance.

How many hours in the summer nights have I passed in the churchyard which lies embedded in those widths of enamelled sward! There, at least, no unseemly decorations maintain, after the great era of equality has commenced, the paltry distinctions of the Past; — distinctions of a day — the equality of the Eternal! There, for the most part unmarked and unrecorded, rise the green hillocks of the humble dead, — or, where the stone registers a

little while the forgotten name and departed date, the epitaph is simple and the material rude. It is the very model, the very ideal, of the country churchyard; so quiet is it; so solitary, so ancient, so unadorned. It is the spot above all others where Death teaches, — not as the spectre, but the angel; obtruding on us no unreal terror, but eloquent with its tender moral of Repose. And who has not felt his heart echo that saying of the brilliant Frenchwoman's,* half intended as a point, but carried by nature, against the very will of the speaker, into a homely and most touching truth: "At times I feel the want to die, as the wakeful feel the want to sleep!"

This is the justest of similes, — worn, wearied, and sated, who has not felt the want to die, as the wakeful the want to sleep? But this is not the lesson which, after a little thought, the true morality of the grave bequeaths. No, it is from death that we extract the noble and magnificent lesson of life. Awed by the sense of its shortness, we turn away elevated by its objects. Let us crowd it with generous and useful deeds, — if eternity be at hand, let us prepare ourselves for its threshold by the aims and ends which are most worthy of the soul; and by the glory of our own thoughts and our own deeds, walk, naturally as it were, to the Immortal. Filling

* Madame du Deffand.

ourselves with this ambition, we rise beyond our sorrows and our cares — we conquer the morbid darkness which satiety gathers round us, and take from the dead a moral won from their spirits and not their dust. He who fails in this does not comprehend the true philosophy of the tomb.

The churchyard — the village — the greensward — the water-side, odorous with reeds and thyme — the woods in which first came to me as from the heart of summer the note of the cuckoo — the limes under which I first read the 'Faëry Queen,' listening to the coo of the ringdove — all united and blended together make the only place on earth wherein I can dream myself back to the gates of youth. All know some such spot — blessed and blessing; — the scene of their childhood — the haunt of their fondest recollections. And while it is yet ours to visit it at will — while it yet rests in the dear and sacred hands to which it belonged of yore — while no stranger sits at the hearth, and no new tenants chase away "the old familiar faces," who has not felt as if in storm and shower there were a shelter over his head — as if he were not unprotected — as if fate preserved a sanctuary to the fugitive, and life a fountain to the weary?

A blessing upon that home, and upon its owner! In the presence of a Mother we feel that our childhood has not all departed! It is as a barrier between ourselves and the advance of Time.

THE CHOICE OF PHYLIAS.

PHYLIAS was a young Athenian, whom the precepts of Socrates had reared to the desire of glory, and the worship of virtue! He wished at once to be great and to be good. Unfortunately, Phylias nourished a third wish, somewhat less elevated, but much more commonly entertained — the wish to be loved! He aimed at esteem, but he yearned for affection; and to an aspiring soul he united a too-susceptible heart.

One day, as he was wandering among the olive-groves that border Cephisus, and indulging in those reveries on his future destiny which make the happiest prerogative of the young, his thoughts thus broke into words: —

"Yes, I will devote my life to the service of my countrymen: I will renounce luxury and ease. Not for me shall be the cooks of Sicily, nor the garlands of Rhodes. My chambers shall not stream with Syrian frankincense, nor resound with the loud shouts of Ionic laughter. No: I will consecrate my youth

to the pursuit of wisdom and the practice of virtue; so shall I become great, and so beloved. For when I have thus sacrificed my enjoyments to the welfare of others, shall they not all honour and esteem me? Will they not insist that I take the middle couch at the public festivals? and will not all the friends of my youth contend who among them shall repose upon my bosom? It is happy to be virtuous; but, O Socrates, is it not even happier to be universally beloved for virtue?"

While Phylias was thus soliloquising, he heard a low, sweet laugh beside him; and, somewhat startled at the sound — for he had fancied himself entirely alone — he turned hastily round, and beheld a figure of very singular appearance. It was a tall man in the prime of life; but one side of the face and form was utterly different from the other: on one side the head was crowned with the festive wreath — the robes flowed loose and disordered — joy and self-complacency sparkled on the smiling countenance. You beheld a gaiety which could not fail to attract; but an air of levity which you could not respect. Widely contrasted was the other half of this strange apparition: without crown or garland, the locks fell in sober flow, after the fashion of the Areopagites; the garb was costly, but decent and composed; and in the eye and brow the aspect was dignified and lofty, but somewhat pensive, and clouded either by thought or care: in the one half

you beheld a boon companion, whom you would welcome and forget; in the other a lofty monitor, from whom you shrank in unacknowledged fear; and whom even in esteeming you were willing carefully to shun.

"And who art thou? And from what foreign country comest thou?" asked the Athenian, in astonishment and awe.

"I come from the Land of the Invisibles," answered the apparition: "and I am thy tutelary demon. Thou art now of that age, and hast attained to that height of mind, in which it is permitted me to warn and to advise thee. By what vain dreams, O Phylias! art thou befooled? Dost thou not see that thou art asking two boons incompatible with each other — to be popular with the many and to be esteemed by the few? Take thy choice of either; thou canst not combine both. Look well at the guise and garb in which I appear to thee; if thou wouldst please in life, thou seest in one half of me the model which thou shouldst imitate; if thou wouldst be renowned in death, in the other half behold an example. Be superior to thy fellow-men in wisdom, and prepare for the hatred of all whose self-love thou wilt wound: be the equal of thy fellow-men in folly, and enjoy the good will they readily accord to the companion who contributes to their amusement without provoking their envy. Look at

me again! which side of mine image wilt thou choose for thy likeness?"

"False demon!" answered Phylias; "thou wouldst sicken me of life itself couldst thou compel me on the one hand to arouse hatred, or on the other to justify contempt. Thou mistakest alike the attributes of the wisdom I covet, and the character of my own ambition. There is nothing in the one so severe that it should repel men's affection, nor in the other so arrogant as to mortify their self-love. Away! thou speakest but to mock or betray me; and art no demon of that kindly race in which Socrates would have permitted a disciple to recognise his guardian spirit."

Again the demon laughed. "Thou wilt know me better one of these days. Meanwhile is thy choice made? Dost thou place thy happiness in the pursuit of renown?"

"Yes!" cried the Athenian; "convinced that if renowned I must be beloved, — because the only fame I desire is that of one who has served his country and benefited mankind."

"Follow the path of life thou hast chosen," said the demon, "and from time to time pause to contrast thyself with Glaucus. Farewell!"

The apparition vanished: musing and bewildered Phylias returned home.

His resolutions were not shaken, nor his ambition damped. He resigned the common pleasures of his

youth; he braced his limbs by hardihood and temperance, and fed the sources of his mind from the quiet fountain of wisdom.

The first essays of his ambition were natural to his period of life. He went through the preparatory exercises, and entered himself a candidate for the crown at the Olympic Games. On the day preceding that on which the Games commenced, Phylias met among the crowd, which a ceremony of such brilliant attraction had gathered together in the Sacred Land, a young man whom he had known from his childhood. Frank in his manner, and joyous in his disposition, Glaucus was the favourite of all who knew him.

Though possessed of considerable talents, no one envied him: for those talents were never exerted in order to distinguish himself — his ambition was to amuse others. He gave way to every caprice of his own or of his comrades, provided that it promised pleasure. Supple and versatile, even the sturdiest philosophers were charmed with his society; and the loosest profligates swore sincerely that they loved, because they were not compelled to respect, him. His countenance never shamed them into a suspicion that their career was ignoble; and they did justice to his talents, because they could sympathise with his foibles.

"You do not contend for any of the prizes, I

think," said Phylias; "for I do not remember to have seen you at the preparatory exercises?"

"Not I, by Hercules!" answered Glaucus, gaily. "I play in the Games the part that I play in Life — I am merely a spectator. Could I drink more deeply, or sleep more soundly, if my statue were set up in the Sacred Grove? Alas! no. Let my friends love Glaucus their comrade — not hate Glaucus their rival. And you?"

"I am a competitor in the chariot race."

"Success to you! I shall offer up my sacrifice for your triumph: meanwhile I am going to hear Therycides read his new play. Farewell!"

"What a charming person is Glaucus!" thought Phylias.

Even Phylias liked Glaucus the better for knowing that Glaucus was not to be his antagonist.

The morning rose — the hour of trial came on. With a flushed cheek, and a beating heart, Phylias mounted his chariot. He was successful: he achieved the palm. He returned to Athens amidst the loudest acclamations. His chariot rolled through the broken wall of his native city: the poets lauded him to the skies. Phylias had commenced the career of fame, and its first fruits were delicious. His parents wept with joy at his triumph; and the old men pointed him out as a model to their sons. Sons hate models; and the more Phylias was praised, the more his contemporaries disliked him. When the novelty of

success was cooled he began to feel that the palm branch had its thorns. If he met his young friends in the street, they saluted him coldly: "We do not ask you to come to us," said they; "you have weightier matters on hand than our society can afford. We are going to sup with Glaucus: while you are meditating, we suppose, the best way to eclipse Alcibiades."

Meetings like these threw an embarrassment over the manner of Phylias himself. He thought that he was ill-treated, and retired into the chamber of pride. He became reserved, and he was called supercilious.

The Olympic Games do not happen every day, and Phylias began to feel that he who is ambitious has no option between excitement and exhaustion. He therefore set about preparing himself for a nobler triumph than that of a charioteer; and from the management of horses aspired to the government of men. He fitted himself for the labours of public life, and the art of public speaking. He attended the popular assemblies — he rose into repute as an orator.

It was a critical time in the history of the Athenian Commonwealth. Alternately caressing and quarrelling with the passionate Alcibiades, his countrymen now saw him a foe in Sparta, and now hailed him a saviour in Athens. Phylias, dreading the ambition of that unprincipled genius, and yet

resisting the encroaching tyranny of the four hundred rulers, performed the duty of a patriot, and pleading for liberty displeased both parties. Nothing could be more disinterested than his conduct, nor more admired than his speeches. He proved his virtue, and he established his fame; and wherever he went he was vehemently abused.

He frequently met with Glaucus, who, taking no share in politics, was entertained by all parties, and the most popular man in Athens, because the most unobtrusive.

"You are become a great man now," said Glaucus to him one day; "and you will doubtless soon arrive at the last honour Athens can confer upon her children. Your property will be confiscated, and your person will be exiled."

"No!" said Phylias, with generous emotion; "truth is great, and must prevail. Misinterpretation and slander will soon die away, and my countrymen will requite me by their esteem."

"The gods grant it!" said the flattering Glaucus. "No man merits esteem more."

In the short intervals of repose which public life allowed to Athenian statesmen, Phylias contrived to fall in love.

Chyllene was beautiful as a dream. She was full of all amiable qualities; but she was a human being, and fond of an agreeable life.

In his passion for Chyllene, Phylias, for the first

time in his career, found a rival in Glaucus; for love was the only passion in which Glaucus did not shun to provoke the jealousy of the powerful. Chyllene was sorely perplexed which to choose: Phylias was so wise, but then Glaucus was so gay; Phylias was so distinguished, but then Glaucus was so popular; Phylias made excellent speeches, — but then how beautifully Glaucus sung!

Unfortunately, in the stern and manly pursuits of his life, Phylias had necessarily outgrown those little arts of pleasing which were so acceptable to the ladies of Athens.

He dressed with a decorous dignity, but not with the studied, yet easy, graces of Glaucus. How, too, amidst all his occupations, could he find the time to deck the doors of his beloved with garlands, to renew the libations on her threshold, and to cover every wall in the city with her name added to the flattering epithet of καλη. But none of these important ceremonies were neglected by Glaucus, in whom the art to please had been the sole study of life. Glaucus gained ground daily.

"I esteem you beyond all men," Chyllene could say to Phylias without a blush. But she trembled, and said nothing, when Glaucus approached.

"I love you better than all things!" said Glaucus, passionately, one day to Chyllene.

"I love you better than all things, save my country," said Phylias the same morning.

"Ah, Phylias is doubtless the best patriot," thought Chyllene; "but Glaucus is certainly the best lover!"

The very weaknesses of Glaucus were charming, but his virtues gave to Phylias something of austerity. With Phylias, Chyllene felt ashamed of her faults; with Glaucus, she was only aware of her merits.

Alcibiades was now the idol of Athens. He prepared to set out with a hundred ships for the Hellespont, to assist the allies of Athens. Willing to rid the city of so vigilant a guard upon his actions as Phylias, he contrived that the latter should be appointed to a command in the fleet. The rank of Glaucus obtained him a lesser but distinguished appointment.

Chyllene was in danger of losing both her lovers.

"Wilt thou desert me?" said she to Phylias.

"Alas! my country demands it. I shall return to thee covered with laurels."

"And thou, Glaucus?"

"Perish Alcibiades and Greece herself, before I quit thee!" cried Glaucus, who, had there been no mistress in the case, would never willingly have renounced luxury for danger.

Phylias, with a new incentive to glory, and a full confidence in the sympathy of his beloved, set out for Andria. Glaucus was taken suddenly ill,

remained at home, and a month afterwards his bride Chyllene was carried by torchlight to his house. It is true that every body at Athens detected the imposition; but every one laughed at it goodhumouredly; "For Glaucus," said they, "never set up for a paragon of virtue!" Thus his want of principle was the very excuse for wanting it.

The expedition to Andria failed — Alcibiades was banished again — and Phylias, though he had performed prodigies of valour, shared in the sentence of his leader. His fellow citizens were too glad of an excuse to rid themselves of that unpleasant sensation which the superiority of another always inflicts on our self-love.

Years rolled away. Phylias had obtained all that his youth coveted of glory. Greece rang with his name; he was now aged, an exile, and a dependant at the Persian court. There every one respected, but no one loved him. The majesty of his mien, the simplicity of his manners, the very splendour of his reputation, made the courtiers of the great king uneasy in his presence. He lived very much alone; and his only recreation was in walking at evening among the alleys of a wood, that reminded him of the groves of Athens, and meditating over the past adventures of his life.

It happened that at this time Glaucus, who had survived both his wife and his patrimony, had suffered himself, under the hope of repairing his broken

fortunes, to be entrapped into a conspiracy to restore the Oligarchy after the death of Conon. He was detected, and his popularity did not save him from banishment. He sought refuge in the Persian court: the elastic gaiety of his disposition still continued, and over his grey hairs yet glowed the festive chaplet of roses. The courtiers were delighted with his wit — the king could not feast without him: — they consulted Phylias, but they associated with Glaucus.

One evening as Phylias was musing in his favourite grove, and as afar off he heard the music and the merriment of a banquet, held by the king in his summer-house, and with Glaucus at his right hand, — the melancholy exile found himself gently plucked by the hem of his garment. He turned hastily round, and once more beheld his Genius.

"Thy last hour fast approaches," said the demon; "again, then, I come to visit thee. At the morning of life I foretold that fate which should continue to its close: I bade thee despair of uniting celebrity and love. Thou hast attempted the union — what hath been thy success?"

"Mysterious visitor!" answered Phylias, "thy words were true, and my hope was formed in the foolishness of youth. I stand alone, honoured and unloved. But surely this is not the doom of all who have pursued a similar ambition?"

"Recollect thyself," replied the phantom: "was

not thy master Socrates persecuted unto death, and Aristides ostracised on account of his virtues? Canst thou name one great man who in life was not calumniated for his services? Thou standest not alone. To shine is to injure the self-love of others; and self-love is the most vindictive of human feelings."

"Yet had I not been an Athenian," murmured Phylias, "I might have received something of gratitude."

"They call Athens ungrateful," answered the spectre; "but everywhere, while time lasts, the ingratitude shall be the same. One state may exile her illustrious men, another merely defame them; but day is not more separate from night, than true fame from general popularity."

"Alas! thou teachest a bitter lesson," said Phylias, sighing; "better, then, to renounce the glory which separates us from the indulgent mercies of our kind. Has not my choice been an error, as well as a misfortune?"

The countenance of the Genius became suddenly divine. Majesty sat upon his brow, and unspeakable wisdom shone from his piercing eyes, as he replied, "Hark! as thou askest thy unworthy question, the laugh of the hoary Glaucus breaks upon thy ear. The gods gave to him the privilege to be beloved — and despised. Wouldst thou, were the past at thy control, — wouldst thou live the life that he

hath lived? wouldst thou, for the smiles of revellers, or for the heart of the mistress of thy manhood, feel that thy career had been worthless, and that thy sepulchre should be unknown? No! by the flush upon thy cheek, thou acknowledgest that to the great the pride of recollection is sufficient happiness in itself. Thine only error was in this, — the wish to obtain the fleeting breath of popular regard, as the *reward* for immortal labours. The illustrious should serve the world, unheeding of its frail applause. The whisper of their own hearts should convey to them a diviner music than the acclamation of crowds. Thou shouldst have sought *only* to be great, so would it never have grieved thee to find thyself unbeloved. The soul of the great should be as a river, rejoicing in its mighty course, and benefiting all — nor conscious of the fading garlands which perishable hands may scatter upon its tide."

The corpse of Phylias was found that night in the wood by some of the revellers returning home. And the Persian king buried the body in a gorgeous sepulchre, and the citizens of Athens ordained a public mourning for his death. And to the name of Phylias a thousand bards promised immortality — and, save in this momentary record, the name of Phylias has perished from the earth!

LAKE LEMAN, AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

THERE are some places in the world which persons of lively imagination, who contract a sympathy with genius, feel it almost a duty to visit. Not to perform such pilgrimages seems a neglect of one of the objects of life. The world has many a Mecca and many a Medina for those who find a prophet in genius, and a holiness in its sepulchre. Of these none are more sacred than

"Leman — with its crystal face."

The very name of the lake retains the spell of the Enchanters who have practised their art upon its banks. Utter the name, think of the Enchanters, and at once before the eye rise the rocks of Meillerie, the white walls of Chillon. Lo, Byron in his boat, with the storm breaking over Jura! — lo, "the covered walk of acacias," in which Gibbon turned from the last page of the work which assured his fame to gaze on the passing wave lighted up by the moment's moonlight. Linger yet longer on that name, think of Enchanters yet more potent over the

fates of men — and before you glide the phantoms of Calvin, Voltaire, Rousseau.

The morning after my arrival at the inn, which is placed (a little distance from Geneva) on the margin of the lake, I crossed to the house which Byron inhabited, and which is almost exactly opposite. The day was calm but gloomy, the waters almost without a ripple. Arrived at the opposite shore you ascend, by a somewhat rude and steep ascent, to a small village, winding round which you come upon the gates of the house. On the right-hand side of the road, as you thus enter, is a vineyard, in which, at that time, the grapes hung ripe and clustering. Within the gates are some three or four trees, ranged in an avenue. Descending a few steps, you see in a small court before the door a rude fountain; it was then dried up — the waters had ceased to play. On either side is a small garden branching from the court, and by the door are rough stone seats. You enter a small hall, and, thence, an apartment containing three rooms. The principal one is charming, — long, and of an oval shape, with carved wainscoting — the windows on three sides of the room command the most beautiful views of Geneva, the Lake, and its opposite shores. They open upon a terrace paved with stone; on that terrace how often he must have "watched with wistful eyes the setting sun!" It was here that he was in the ripest maturity of his genius — in the most interest-

ing epoch of his life. He had passed the bridge that divided him from his country, but the bridge was not yet broken down. He had not yet been enervated by the soft south. His luxuries were still of the intellect — his sensualism was yet of nature — his mind had not faded from its youthfulness and vigour — his was yet the season of hope rather than of performance, and the world dreamed more of what he would be than what he was or had been.

His works (the Paris edition) were on the table. Himself was everywhere! Near to this room is a smaller cabinet, very simply and rudely furnished. On one side, in a recess, is a bed, — on the other, a door communicates with a dressing-room. Here, I was told, he was chiefly accustomed to write. And what works? "Manfred," and the most beautiful stanzas of the third canto of "Childe Harold," rush at once upon our memory. You now ascend the stairs, and pass a kind of corridor, at the end of which is a window, commanding a superb view of the Lake. This corridor or passage is hung with some curious but wretched portraits. Francis I., Diana of Poitiers, and Julius Scaliger among the rest. You now enter his bedroom. Nothing can be more homely than the furniture; the bed is in a recess, and in one corner an old walnut-tree bureau, where you may still see written over some of the compartments, "Letters of Lady B——." His ideal life vanishes before this simple label, and all the weariness, and

all the disappointment of his real domestic life, come sadly upon you. You recall the nine executions in one year — the annoyance and the bickering, and the estrangement, and the gossip-scandal of the world, and the "Broken Household Gods."* Men may moralise as they will, but misfortunes cause error, — and atone for it!

I wished to see no other rooms but those occupied by him. I did not stay to look at the rest. I passed into the small garden that fronts the house — here was another fountain which the Nymph had not deserted. Over it drooped the boughs of a willow; beyond, undivided by any barrier, spread a vineyard, whose verdant leaves and laughing fruit contrasted somewhat painfully with the associations of the spot. The Great Mother is easily consoled for the loss of the brightest of her children. The

* "I was disposed to be pleased. I am a lover of Nature and an admirer of Beauty. I can bear fatigue, and welcome privation, and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. But in all this, the recollection of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more *home desolation*, which must accompany me through life, has preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the shepherd, the crashing of the avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the glory, around, above, and beneath me." — Byron's *Journal of his Swiss Tour.*

sky was more in harmony with the *Genius Loci* than the earth. Its quiet and gloomy clouds were reflected upon the unwrinkled stillness of the Lake; and afar its horizon rested, in a thousand mists, upon the crests of the melancholy mountains.

The next day I was impatient to divert my mind from the reflections which saddened it whenever, from the gardens of the hotel, I caught sight of the opposite villa, with all its mournful associations. I repaired on a less interesting pilgrimage, though to a yet more popular shrine. What Byron was for a season, Voltaire was for half a century: a power in himself — the cynosure of civilization — the dictator of the Intellectual Republic. He was one of the few in whom thought has produced the same results as action. Modern Europe can boast of many a profounder thinker, whose influence has been incalculably more acknowledged in those lofty regions in which the philosophy of pure reasoning holds her home. But perhaps no one among them has exercised so extensive a sway over the average order of minds in the relationship between philosophy and politics. Not that to him or to the freethinkers with whom he co-operated up to a certain extent, but whom he mocked as visionaries if they went beyond it, are to be ascribed the causes of that French Revolution from which civilized communities date a new era in their annals. The causes would have equally existed if Voltaire had never written a line.

His influence was on the effects — it permeated the spirit which the Revolution conceived. That spirit was the copyist of his genius in its power to destroy and its impotence to reconstruct. Where it pulled down with Voltaire its triumph was signal; where it sought to build up with Rousseau its failure was signal.

The drive from Geneva to Ferney is picturesque and well cultivated enough to make us doubt the accuracy of the descriptions which proclaim the country round Ferney to have been a desert prior to the settlement of Voltaire. You approach the house by an avenue. To the left is the well-known church which "Voltaire erected to God." ("Deo erexit Voltaire.") It is the mode among tourists to wonder at this piety, and to call it inconsistent with the tenets of its founder. But tourists are seldom profound inquirers. Any one the least acquainted with Voltaire's writings, would know that atheism is the last charge to be laid to his account. He is one of the strongest arguers Philosophy possesses in favour of the existence of the Supreme Being; and much as he ridicules fanatics, they are well off from his satire when compared with the atheists. His zeal, indeed, for the Divine existence sometimes carries him beyond his judgment, as in that Romance, where Dr. Friend (Doctor of Divinity, and *Member of Parliament!*) converts his son *Jenni* (what names these Frenchmen do give us!), and Jenni's friend Birton, in a dispute before a circle of savages. —

Dr. Friend overthrows the sturdy Atheist with too obvious an ease. In fact, Voltaire was impatient of an argument against which he invariably declared that the evidence of our senses was opposed. He was intolerance itself to a reasoner against the evidence of reason. I must be pardoned for doing Voltaire this justice — I do not wish to leave atheism so brilliant an authority.

Opposite to the church, and detached from the house, was once the theatre, now pulled down — a thick copse is planted on the site. I should like, I own, to have seen, even while I defend Voltaire's belief in a Deity, whether "Mahomet" or "Le bon Dieu" were the better lodged!"

The house is now before you — long, regular, and tolerably handsome, when compared with the usual character of French or of Swiss architecture. It has been described so often, that I would not go over the same ground if it did not possess an interest which no repetition can wear away. Besides, it helps to illustrate the character of the owner. A man's home is often a witness of himself.

The *salle de reception* is a small room, the furniture unaltered — the same needlework chairs in cabriole frames of oak — the same red-flowered velvet on the walls. The insensibility to beautiful form in the abstract which rendered Votaire a bad critic, except where some genuine work of art, like a tragedy by Corneille, happened to be in ac-

cordance with his conventional taste, seems typified in the wretched pictures, which would have put an English poet into a nervous fever — and in the huge stove, elaborately gaudy, of barbarous shape, and profusely gilt, which supports his bust. In this room is the celebrated picture of which tradition says that he gave the design. Herein Voltaire is depicted as presenting the 'Henriade' to Apollo, while his enemies are sinking into the infernal regions, and Envy is expiring at his feet! A singular proof of the modesty of merit, and the tolerance of philosophy. So there *is* a hell then for disbelievers — in Voltaire! But we must not take such a design in a literal spirit. Voltaire was a conceited man, but he was also a consummate man of the world. We may depend upon it that he himself laughed at the whole thing as much as any one else. How merry he must have been when he pointed out the face of each particular foe! How gaily he must have jested on their damnatory condition! It was one of those joyous revenges in which the extravagance of caricature proves the absence of malignity. Malignity is a sombre and melancholic vice, incompatible with the brisk animal spirits which Voltaire retained to the last.

The bedroom joins the salon; it contains the portraits of Frederic the Great and himself, which were engraved for the edition of his works by Beaumarchais. You see here the vase in which his heart

was placed, with the sentiment of "*Mon esprit est partout — Mon cœur est ici.*" Le Kain's portrait hangs over his bed. Voltaire was the man to appreciate an actor: he had owed much of his own success in life to his knowledge of stage effect, and he did not like Nature to be too natural. The first thought of a born poet like Byron, in building his house in such a spot, would have been to open the windows of his favourite rooms upon the most beautiful parts of that enchanting scenery. But Voltaire's windows are all carefully turned the other way! You do not behold from them either the Lake or the Alps, a view which (for they are visible immediately on entering the garden) might so easily have been obtained. But the Lake and the Alps were not things Voltaire ever thought it necessary either to describe or study. Living chiefly in the country, he was essentially the poet of cities. And even his profound investigation of men was of artificial men. If men had neither profound emotions, nor subtle thoughts and intense imaginations, Voltaire would have been the greatest painter of mankind that ever existed.

You leave the house — you descend a few steps; opposite to you is a narrow road, with an avenue of poplars. You enter into a green, overarching alley, which would be completely closed in by the thickset hedge on either side, if here and there little mimic windows had not been cut through the

boughs: through these windows you may take an occasional peep at the majestic scenery beyond. That was the way Voltaire liked to look at Nature; through little windows in an artificial hedge! And without the hedge, the landscape would have been so glorious! This was Voltaire's favourite morning walk. At the end is a bench, upon which the great man was wont to sit, and think. I see him now, in his gold-laced crimson coat — his stockings drawn half-way up the thigh — his chin rested on his long cane — his eyes, not dark, as they are sometimes misrepresented, but of a clear and steely blue — fixed, not on the ground, nor upward, but on the space before him; — thus does the old gardener, who remembers, pretend to describe him: I see him meditating his last journey to Paris, — that most glorious consummation of a life of literary triumph which has ever been accorded to a literary man — that death which came from the poison of his own laurels. Never did Fame illumine so intensely the passage to the grave: but the same torch that flashed upon the triumph, lighted the pyre. It was like the last scene of some gorgeous melodrame, and the very effect which most dazzled the audience was the signal to drop the curtain!

The old gardener, who boasts himself to have passed his hundredth year, declares that he has the most perfect recollection of the person of Voltaire; I taxed that recollection severely. I was surprised

to hear that even in age, and despite the habit of stooping, Voltaire was considerably above the middle height. But the gardener dwelt with greater pleasure on his dress than his person; he was very proud of the full wig and the laced waistcoat, still prouder of the gilt coach and the four long-tailed horses. Voltaire loved parade — there was nothing simple about his tastes. It was not indeed the age of simplicity.

Amidst a gravel space in a long slip of turf, untouched since it was laid down by Voltaire himself, and not far from it is the tree he planted, fair, tall, and flourishing; at the time I saw it, the sun was playing cheerily through its delicate leaves. From none of his works is the freshness so little faded. My visit to Byron's house of the day before, my visit now to Ferney, naturally brought the illustrious inhabitants of each into contrast and comparison. In the persecution each had undergone, in the absorbing personal power which each had obtained, there was something similar. But Byron attached himself to the heart, and Voltaire to the intellect. Perhaps if Byron had lived to old age and followed out the impulses of Don Juan, he would have gradually drawn the comparison closer. And, indeed, he had more in common with Voltaire than with Rousseau, to whom he has been likened. He was above the effeminacy and the falseness of Rousseau; and he had the strong sense, and the stern mockery, and

the earnest bitterness of Voltaire. Both Byron and Voltaire wanted a true mastery over the *passions;* for Byron does not paint nor arouse passion;* he paints and he arouses *sentiment.* But in Byron sentiment itself had much of the strength and all the intensity of passion. He kindled thoughts into feelings. Voltaire had no sentiment in his writings, though not, perhaps, devoid of it in himself. Indeed he could not have been generous with so much delicacy, if he

* Byron has been called, by superficial critics, the Poet of Passion, but it is not true. To paint passion, you must paint the struggle of passion; and this Byron (out of his plays at least) never does. There is no delineation of passion in the love of Medora, nor even of Gulnare; but the sentiment in each is made as powerful as passion itself. Everywhere, in 'Childe Harold,' in 'Don Juan,' in the Eastern Tales, Byron paints sentiments, not passions. When Macbeth soliloquises on his "way of life," he utters a sentiment; — when he pauses before he murders his king, he bares to us his passions. Othello, torn by that jealousy which is half love and half hatred, is a portraiture of passion: Childe Harold moralising over Rome, is a portraiture of sentiment. The Poets of Passion paint various and contending emotions, each warring with the other. The Poets of Sentiment paint the prevalence of one particular cast of thought, or affection of the mind. But readers are too apt to confuse the two, and to call an author a passionate writer if his hero always says he is passionately in love. Few persons would allow that Clarissa and Clementina are finer delineations of passion than Julia and Haidée.

had not possessed a finer and a softer spirit than his works display. Still less could he have had that singular love for the unfortunate, that courageous compassion for the oppressed, which so prominently illustrate his later life. No one could with less justice be called "heartless" than Voltaire. He was remarkably tenacious of all early friendships, and loved as strongly as he disdained deeply. Any tale of distress imposed upon him easily; he was the creature of impulse, and half a child to the last. He had a stronger feeling for humanity than any of his contemporaries: he wept when he saw Turgot, and it was in sobs that he stammered out, "*Laissez-moi baiser cette main qui a signé le salut du peuple.*" Had Voltaire never written a line, he would have come down to posterity as a practical philanthropist. A village of fifty peasant inhabitants was changed by him into the home of twelve hundred manufacturers. His character at Ferney is still that of the father of the poor. As a man he was vain, self-confident, wayward, irascible; but kind-hearted, generous, and easily moved. He had nothing of the Mephistophiles. His fault was, that he was too human — that is, too weak and too unsteady. We must remember that, in opposing religious opinion, he was opposing the opinion of monks and Jesuits; — and Fanaticism discontented him with Christianity. Observe the difference with which he speaks of the Protestant faith — with what gravity and respect. Had he

been born in England, I doubt if Voltaire would have attacked Christianity; had he been born two centuries before, I doubt whether his spirit of research, and his daring courage, would not have made him the reformer of the church and not its antagonist. It may be the difference of time and place that makes all the difference between a Luther and a Voltaire.

As an Author, his genius has been disputed on the ground that, though in many things it is eminent, in no one thing it is pre-eminent. The proposition is not fair — it is pre-eminence to do eminently well a greater variety of things, each requiring extraordinary capacities to do, than the genius of any single author has ever yet achieved. He *has written* pre-eminently well! He is, on the whole, the greatest prose writer his country has produced.

From Ferney I went to Coppet; diverting my thoughts from the least to the most sentimental of writers. Voltaire is the moral antipodes to De Staël. The road to Coppet from Ferney is pretty but monotonous. You approach the house by a field or paddock, which reminds you of England. To the left, in a thick copse, is the tomb of Madame de Staël. As I saw it, how many of her eloquent thoughts on the weariness of life rushed to my memory! No one perhaps ever felt more palpably the stirrings of the soul within, than she whose dust lay there. Few had ever longed more intensely for wings to flee

away and be at rest. She wanted precisely that which Voltaire had — common sense. She had precisely that which Voltaire wanted — sentiment. Of the last it has been said, that he had the talent which the greater number of persons possess but in the greatest degree. Madame de Staël had the talent which few possess, but *not* in the greatest degree. For her thoughts are uncommon, but not profound; and her imagination is destitute of invention. No work so imaginative as the 'Corinne' was ever so little inventive.

And now the house is before you. Opposite the entrance, iron gates admit a glimpse of grounds laid out in the English fashion. The library opens at once from the hall; a long and handsome room containing a statue of Necker: the forehead of the minister is low, and the face has in it more of *bonhomie* than *esprit*. In fact, that very respectable man was a little too dull for his position. The windows look out on a gravel-walk or terrace; the library communicates with a bedroom hung with old tapestry.

In the *salle à manger* on the first floor is a bust of A. W. Schlegel and a print of Lafayette. Out of the billiard-room, the largest room of the suite, is the room where Madame de Staël usually slept, and frequently wrote, though the good woman who did the honours declared "she wrote in *all* the rooms." Her writing indeed was but an episode in her conversation. Least of all persons was Madame de Staël

one person as a writer, and another as a woman. Her whole character was in harmony; her thoughts always overflowed and were always restless. She assumed nothing factitious when she wrote. She wrote as she would have spoken.* Such authors are rare. On the other side of the billiard-room, is a small *salon* in which there is a fine bust of Necker, a picture of Baron de Staël, and one of herself in a turban. Every one knows that countenance full of power, if not of beauty, with its deep dark eyes. Here are still shown her writing-book and inkstand. Throughout the whole house is an air of English comfort and quiet opulence. The furniture is plain and simple — nothing overpowers the charm of the place; and no undue magnificence diverts you from the main thought of the genius to which it is consecrated. The grounds are natural, but not remarkable. A very narrow but fresh streamlet borders them to the right. I was much pleased by the

* Madame de Staël wrote "*à la volée.*" "Even in her most inspired compositions," says Madame Necker de Saussure, "she had pleasure to be interrupted by those she loved." There are some persons whose whole life is inspiration. Madame de Staël was one of these. She was not of that tribe who labour to be inspired, who darken the room and lock the door, and entreat you not to disturb them. It was a part of her character to care little about her works once printed. They had done their office, they had relieved her mind, and the mind had passed onward to new ideas.

polished nature of a notice to the people not to commit depredations. The proprietor put his "grounds under the protection" of the visitors he admitted. This is in the true spirit of gentle breeding.

It is impossible to quit this place without feeling that it bequeaths a tender and enduring recollection. Madame de Staël was the *male* Rousseau! She had all his enthusiasm and none of his meanness. In the eloquence of diction she would have surpassed him, if she had not been too eloquent. But she perfumes her violets and rouges her roses. Yet her heart was womanly, while her intellect was masculine, and the heart dictated while the intellect adorned. She could not have reasoned, if you had silenced in her the affections. The charm and the error of her writings have the same cause. She took for convictions what were but feelings. She built up a philosophy in emotion. Few persons felt more deeply the melancholy of life. It was enough to sadden that yearning heart — the thought so often on her lips, "Jamais je n'ai été aimée comme j'aime." But, on the other hand, her susceptibility consoled while it wounded her. Like all poets she had a profound sense of the common luxury of *being*. She felt the truth that the pleasures are greater than the pains of life, and approved the sentiment of Horne Tooke when he said to Erskine, "If you had but obtained for me ten years of life in a dungeon with my books, and a pen and ink, I should have thanked you." None but

the sensitive feel what a glorious possession existence is. The religion which was a part of her very nature, contributed to render to this existence a diviner charm. How tender and how characteristic that thought of hers, that if any happiness chanced to her after her father's death, "it was to his mediation she owed it:" as if he were living! — To her he was living in heaven! Peace to her beautiful memory! Her genius is without a superior in her own sex; and if it be ever exceeded, it must be by one more or less than woman.

The drive homeward from Coppet to Geneva is far more picturesque than that from Ferney to Coppet. As you approach Geneva, villa upon villa rises cheerfully on the landscape; and you feel a certain thrill as you pass the house inhabited by Marie Louise after the fall of Napoleon. These excursions in the neighbourhood of Geneva spread to a wider circle the associations of the Lake; — they are of Leman. And if the exiles of the earth resort to that serene vicinity, hers is the smile that wins them. She received the persecuted and the weary — they repaid the benefit in glory.

It was a warm, clear, and sunny day, on which I commenced the voyage of the Lake. Looking behind, I gazed on the roofs and spires of Geneva, and forgot the present in the past. What to me was its little community of watchmakers, and its little colony of English? I saw Charles of Savoy at its gates —

I heard the voice of Berthelier invoking Liberty, and summoning to arms. The struggle past — the scaffold rose and the patriot became the martyr. His blood was not spilt in vain. Religion became the resurrection of Freedom. The town is silent — it is under excommunication. Suddenly a murmur is heard — it rises — it gathers — the people are awake — they sweep the streets — the images are broken: Farel is preaching to the council! Yet a little while, and the stern soul of Calvin is at work within those walls. The loftiest of the reformers, and the one whose influence has been the most wide and lasting, is the earliest also of the great tribe of the persecuted which the City of the Lake receives within her arms. The benefits he repaid — behold them around! Wherever property is secure, wherever thought is free, wherever the ancient learning is revived, wherever the ancient spirit has been caught, you trace the work of the reformation, and the inflexible, inquisitive, unconquerable soul of Calvin! He foresaw not, it is true, nor designed, the effects he has produced. The same sternness of purpose, the same rigidity of conscience that led him to reform, urged him to persecute. The exile of Bolsec, and the martyrdom of Servede, rest darkly upon his name. But the blessings we owe to the first inquirers compensate their errors. Had Calvin not lived, there would have been not one but a thousand Servedes! The spirit of inquiry redeems itself as it advances; once

loosed, it will not stop at the limit to which its early disciples would restrain it. Born with them, it does not grow with their growth, it survives their death — it but commences where they conclude. In one century, the flames are for the person, in another for the work; in the third, work and person are alike sacred. The same town that condemned *Le Contrat Social* to the conflagration, now boasts, in the memory of Rousseau, its most recognized, title-deed of renown.

I turned from Geneva; and the villa of Byron, and the scarce-seen cottage of Shelley glided by. Of all landscape scenery, that of lakes pleases me the most. It has the movement without the monotony of the ocean. But in point of scenic attraction, I cannot compare Leman with Como or the Lago Maggiore. If ever, as I hope my age may, it is mine to "find out the peaceful hermitage," it shall be amidst the pines of Como, with its waves of liquid sunshine, and its endless variety of shade and colour, as near to the scenes and waterfalls of Pliny's delicious fountain as I can buy or build a tenement. There is not enough of splendour in the Swiss climate. It does not give that serene sense of existence — that passive luxury of enjoyment — that paradise of the air and sun, which belong to Italy.

The banks of Leman, as seen from the middle of the water, lose much of their effect owing to the great breadth of the lake; while the height of the

Alps beyond is diminished by their distance from the eye. Nearness is necessary to the sublime. A narrow stream, with Mont Blanc alone towering by its side, would be the grandest spectacle in the world. But the oppression, the awe, and the undefinable sense of danger which belong to the sublime in natural objects, are lost when the objects are removed from our immediate vicinity. There is something of sameness too in the greater part of the voyage across the lake, unless you wind near the coast. The banks themselves often vary, but the mountains in the background invest the whole with one common character. To see the lake to the greatest advantage, avoid, — oh, avoid the steam-vessel, and creep close by either shore. Beyond Ouchy and Lausanne the scenery improves in richness and effect. As the walls of the latter slowly receded from me, the sky itself scarcely equalled the stillness of the water. It lay deep and silent as death, the dark rocks crested with cloud, flinging long and far shadows over the surface. Gazing on Lausanne, I recalled the words of Gibbon; I had not read the passage for years; I could not have quoted a syllable of it the day before, and now it rushed upon my mind so accurately, that I found little but the dates to alter, when I compared my recollection with the page. "It was," said he, "on the day or rather the night of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last line of the last page in a summerhouse in

my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waves, and all nature was silent." What a picture! Who does not enter into the feelings of the man who had just completed the work that was to render him immortal? What calm fulness of triumph, of a confidence too stately for vanity, does the description breathe! I know not which has the more poetry, the conception of the work or the conclusion — the conception amidst the "ruins of the Capitol, while the bareheaded friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter," or the conclusion in the stillness and solitude of night, amidst the Helvetian Alps. With what tranquil collectedness of thought he seems to bask and luxuriate as it were in the sentiment of his own glory! At such a moment did Gibbon feel that his soul which achieved the glory was yet more imperishable. The artificer is greater than the work. The triumphs we achieve, our conquests of the domain of Time, can but feebly flatter our self-esteem, unless we regard them as the proofs of what we are. For who would submit to deem himself the blind nursery of thoughts to be grafted on other soils, when the clay which nurtured them has crumbled to unproductive atoms? — To consider what Shakspeare thought, while on earth, is

a noble contemplation; but it is nobler yet to conjecture what, now, may be the musings, and what the aspirations, of that spirit exalted to a sublimer career of being. It were the wildest madness of human vanity to imagine that God created such spirits only for the earth: like the stars, they shine upon us, but their uses and their destinies are not limited to the office of lamps to a solitary speck in the infinite creation. Such waste of spirit were, indeed, a disproportionate prodigality, wholly alien to the economy and system of the universe!

But new objects rise to demand the thought. Opposite are the heights of Meillerie; seen from the water, they present little to distinguish them from the neighbouring rocks. The village lies scattered at the base, with the single spire rising above the roofs. I made the boatmen row towards the shore, and landed somewhere about the old and rugged town or village of Evian. Walking thence to Meillerie along the banks of the lake, nothing could be richer than the scene around. The sun was slowly, sinking, the waters majestically calm, and a long row of walnut-trees fringed the margin; above, the shore slopes upward, covered with verdure. Proceeding onward, the ascent is yet more thickly wooded, until the steep and almost perpendicular heights of Meillerie are before you — here grey and barren, there clothed with tangled and fantastic bushes. At a little distance you may see the village

with the spiral steeple rising sharp against the mountain; winding farther, you may survey on the opposite shore the immortal Clarens: and whitely gleaming over the water, the walls of Chillon. As I paused, the waters languidly rippled at my feet, and one long rose-cloud, the immortalised and consecrated hues of Meillerie transferred from their proper home, faded lingeringly from the steeps of Jura. I confess myself, in some respects, to be rather of Scott's than Byron's opinion as to the merits of the Héloise. Julie and St. Preux are to me, as to Scott, "two tiresome pedants." But they are eloquent pedants! The charm of Rousseau is not in the characters he draws, but in the sentiments he ascribes to them. I lose the individuality of the characters — I forget, I dismiss them. I take the sentiments, and find characters of my own more worthy of them. Meillerie is not to me consecrated by Julie, but by ideal love. It is the Julie of one's own heart, the visions of one's own youth, that one invokes and conjures up in scenes which no criticism, no reasoning, can divorce from the associations of love. We think not of the idealist, but of the ideal. Rousseau intoxicates us with his own egotism. We are wrapped in ourselves — in our own creations, and not in his; — so at least it was with me. When shall I forget that twilight by the shores of Meillerie — or that starlit wave which bore me back to the opposite shore? The wind breathing low from Clarens — Chillon

sleeping in the distance, and all the thoughts and dreams and unuttered, unutterable memories of the youth and passion for ever gone, busy in my soul. The place was full, not of Rousseau, but that which had inspired him — hallowed not by the priest, but by the god.

I have not very distinctly marked the time occupied by the voyage I describe, but when next I resumed my excursion it was late at noon.

I had seen at Vevay the tomb of Ludlow the regicide. A stern contrast to the *Bosquets* (now, alas! potato-grounds) of Julie! And from the water, the old town of Vevay seemed to me to have something in its aspect grateful to the grim shade of the Kingslayer. Yet even that memory has associations worthy of the tenderness of feeling which invests the place; and one of the most beautiful instances of woman's affection is the faithful valour with which his wife shared the dangers and vicissitudes of the republican's chequered life. His monument is built by her. And though, in a time when all the nice distinctions of justice on either side were swept away, the zeal of Ludlow wrote itself in blood that it had been more just to spare, the whole annals of that mighty war cannot furnish a more self-contemning, unpurchasable, and honest heart. His ashes are not the least valuable relics of the shores of Leman.

Again; as you wind a jutting projection of the land, Clarens rises upon you, chiefly noticeable from

its look of serene and entire repose. You see the house which Byron inhabited for some little time, and which has nothing remarkable in its appearance. This, perhaps, is the most striking part of the voyage. Dark shadows from the Alps, at the right, fell over the wave; but to the left, towards Clarens, all was bright and sunny, and beautifully still. Looking back, the lake was one sheet of molten gold — wide and vast it slept in its glory; the shore on the right indistinct from its very brightness — that to the left, marked and stern from its very shadow.

Chillon, which is long, white, and, till closely approached, more like a modern than an ancient building, is backed by mountains covered with verdure. You survey now the end of the lake; a long ridge of the greenest foliage, from amidst which the frequent poplar rises, tall and picturesque, the spire of the grove. And now, nearing Villeneuve, you sail by the little isle hallowed by Byron —

> "A little isle,
> Which in my very face did smile,
> The only one in view;
> A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
> Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
> But in it there were three tall trees," &c.*

The trees were still there, young and flourishing; by their side a solitary shed. Villeneuve itself,

* 'Prisoner of Chillon,' line 341, sq.

backed by mountains, has a venerable air, as if vindicating the antiquity it boasts.

I landed with regret, even though the pilgrimage to Chillon was before me. And still I lingered by the wave — and still gazed along its soft expanse. Perhaps, in the vanity common to so many, who possess themselves in thought of a shadowy and unreal future, I may have dreamed, as I paused and gazed, that from among the lesser names which Leman retains and blends with those more lofty and august, she may not disdainfully reject that of one who felt at least the devotion of the pilgrim, if he caught not an inspiration from the shrine.

THE TRUE ORDEAL OF LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

NEVER were two persons more passionately attached to each other than Adolphe and Celeste! Their love was a proverb. Of course it was an unhappy attachment — nobody loves heartily, unless people take pains to prevent it. The spirit of contradiction is prodigiously strong in its effects.

Adolphe was rich and noble — Celeste was noble and poor. Their families were at variance; the family of Adolphe was exceedingly ambitious, and that of Celeste exceedingly proud. Had the fathers been the best friends in the world, they would not have assented to the loves of their children: Adolphe's father, because he desired a rich match for his son; Celeste's, because he was too proud to be under an obligation, and he was sufficiently a man of the world to know that you are to be considered obliged when a rich nobleman marries your daughter without a dower. Celeste's father would have fain married her to a wealthy *parvenu* of whose riches he could have

availed himself without lowering his own sense of dignity; for it was a maxim in the *beau monde* of that day, that where a noble took the money of a *roturier* he did not receive, he conferred an obligation. The larger the sums he took, the greater the obligation he conferred. No sooner, therefore, was the dawning attachment of the lovers discovered, than their relations felt it their duty to be amazingly displeased. There cannot be a doubt that you have an absolute right to the eyes, nerves, and hearts of your children. They have no business to be happy, unless it be exactly in the way most agreeable to yourself. These self-evident truths were not, however, irresistible for Adolphe and Celeste. Although the latter was locked up, and the former was watched, they contrived often to correspond, and sometimes to see each other. Their love was no passing caprice — despite all difficulties, all obstacles, all dangers, it was more intense than ever at the end of a year. Celeste had gallantly refused two young merchants, handsome and ardent, and a very old banker who would have left her a widow in a year. Adolphe — the gay and handsome Adolphe — had renounced every flirtation and conquest; all women had palled in his eyes since he had seen Celeste. But though their passion was strengthened by time, time had failed to increase their hopes of union — they began to doubt and to despair. The rose fled from Celeste's cheek — she pined away, her lip had lost its smile, her

form shrunk from its roundness, tears stood constantly in her eyes, and she sighed so that it went to the hearts of all the servants in the house. In fine, she fell ill; — poor girl, she was dying for love. The more violent passion of Adolphe produced also its disorder. His pulse burned with fever, his language was often incoherent — his great-grandfather had been mad — Adolphe promised fairly to take after his ancestor.

Alarmed, but not softened, the father of our lover spoke to him earnestly. "Renounce this ill-placed love. Idleness is the parent of this youthful folly. I will devote half my fortune to purchase you that situation at Court you have so often coveted as the height of your ambition. My son, you are young, bold, and aspiring; your fortunes, your fame will be secured. I willingly make you this sacrifice, provided you abandon Celeste."

Adolphe wrung the hand of his father. "Impossible!" he murmured: "one look from her is worth all the dreams of ambition." So saying, he left the room.

At length, finding they could not live together, our lovers formed the desperate design — not to live divided; — in short, they resolved upon suicide. I wish I had been able to obtain leave to publish the letters which passed between them on this melancholy subject. I never read any so simple and so touching: if you had seen them you would have

thought it the plainest proposition in the world, that persons, with any real affection for each other, ought never to be unprovided with prussic acid, or laudanum at the least; — who knows but what an accident may separate them of a sudden? And to be separated! — how much pleasanter to be dead!

The lovers agreed, then, to poison themselves on the same night. Their last letters were written blistered with the tears of the writers. It was eleven o'clock. Adolphe had retired to his chamber — he took up the poison — he looked at it wistfully. "To-morrow," said he, musingly — "to-morrow" — and he extracted the cork — "to-morrow — it smells very disagreeably — to-morrow I shall be at rest. This heart" — he shook the phial — "how it froths! — this heart will have ceased to beat — and our cruel parents will not forbid us a common grave." So saying, he sighed heavily, and, muttering the name of Celeste, gulped down the fatal draught.

Meanwhile, the father and mother of Adolphe were still at supper. The old butler, who had wiped his eyes when Adolphe had left the room, fidgeted to and fro, with the air of a man who has something on his mind. As his master was very hungry, and his mistress very sleepy, the good old man was heeded by neither. At length, when the other attendants had withdrawn, the old man lingered behind.

"That is quite right — that will do — shut the door after you."

"Sir — yes, sir ——. Did you —— hem."

"Did I what?"

"My young master, sir — yes, sir."

"Your young master? Well ——"

"Alas! sir, I fear he is not quite right. Did you observe how he looked when he left the room?"

"*Ma foi!* — I was engaged with the chicken."

"And you, madam, he kissed your hand very affectionately."

"Ah, yes (drowsily); he has an excellent heart, *le cher enfant!*"

"And, madam, I don't like to say anything — but — but — my young master has been muttering very odd things to himself for the last two or three days, and all this morning he has been poisoning the dogs, by way, he said, of experiment."

"Poison!" said the mother, thoroughly awakened — "has he got any poison?"

"Ah, yes, madam, his pockets full."

"Heavens!" cried the father, "this must not be — if he should in despair — he is a very odd boy. His great-grandfather died mad. I will instantly go to his room."

"And I too," cried the mother.

The good couple hurried to Adolphe's chamber; they heard a groan as they opened the door; they

found their son stretched on the bed, pale and haggard; on the table was a phial, labelled "poison;" the phial was empty.

"My son, my son! — you have not been so wicked — you have not — speak — speak!"

"Oh! I suffer tortures! — Oh! oh! I am dying. Leave me! Celeste also has taken poison — we could not live together. — Cruel parents — we mock you, and die!"

"Recover — recover, my son, and Celeste shall be yours," cried the mother, half in hysterics.

The father was already gone for a surgeon. The surgeon lived near to Celeste, and while he was hastily preparing his antidotes, his visitor had the charity to run to the house of Celeste's father, and hastily apprise him of the intelligence he had learned. The poor old gentleman hobbled off to his daughter's room. Luckily he found his wife with her; she had been giving the *petite* good advice, and that is a very prolix habit. Celeste was impatiently awaiting her departure; she was dying to be dead! In rushed her father — "Child, child, here's news, indeed! Are you alive, Celeste — have you poisoned yourself? That young reprobate is already ——"

"Already!" cried Celeste, clasping her hands — "Already! — he awaits me, then. Ah, this appointment, at least, I will not break!" She sprang to her bedside, and seized a phial from under the pillow;

but the father was in time — he snatched it from her hand, and his daughter fell into fits so violent, that they threatened to be no less fatal than the poison.

CHAPTER II.

WHATEVER the exaggerations of our lovers, they loved really, fervently, disinterestedly, and with all their hearts. Not one in ten thousand loves is so strong, or promises to be so lasting.

Adolphe did not die — the antidotes were given in time — he recovered. The illness of Celeste was more dangerous — a delirious fever set in, and it was several weeks before her life and reason were restored.

No parents could stand all this: ordinary caprices it is very well to resist, but when young people take to poison and delirious fever — the time for concession has arrived. Besides, such events derange one's establishment and interrupt one's comforts. One is always glad to come to terms when one begins to be annoyed oneself. The old people then made it up, and the young people married. As the bridegroom and Celeste were convinced that the sole object of life was each other's company, they hastened at once to the sweet solitudes of the country. They had a charming villa and beautiful gardens. They

were both accomplished — clever — amiable — young — and in love. How was it possible they should be susceptible of *ennui?* They could never bear to lose sight of each other.

"Ah, Adolphe — traitor — where hast thou been?"

"Merely shooting in the woods, my angel."

"What, and without me! Fie! promise this shall not happen again."

"Ah, dearest! too gladly I promise."

Another time —

"What, Celeste! — three hours have I been seeking for you! Where have you hid yourself?"

"Don't look so angry, my Adolphe; I was only directing the gardener to build a little arbour for you to read in. I meant it as a surprise."

"My own Celeste! but three hours — it is an eternity without you! Promise not to leave me again, without telling me where to find you."

"My own dearest, dearest Adolphe! how I love you — may my company ever be as dear to you!"

This mode of life is very charming with many for a few days. Adolphe and Celeste loved each other so entirely that it lasted several months. What at first was passion had grown habit, and each blamed the other for want of affection, if he or she ever indulged in the novelty of different pursuits.

As they had nothing to do but to look at those faces they had thought so handsome, so it was now

and then difficult not to yawn; and of late there had been little speeches like the following:

"Adolphe, my love, you never talk to me — put down that odious book you are always reading."

"Celeste, my angel, you don't hear me. I am telling you about my travels, and you gape in my face."

"My dear Adolphe, I am so exceedingly sleepy."

One morning, as Adolphe woke and turned in his bed, his eyes rested on his wife, who was still asleep — "Bless me," thought he, "I never saw this before — let me look again — yes, certainly, she has a wart on her chin!"

Adolphe rose and dressed himself — Adolphe was grave and meditative. They met at breakfast — the bride and bridegroom. Celeste was in high spirits, Adolphe was sombre and dejected.

"Let us ride to-day," said Celeste.

"My dear, I have a headache."

"Poor child! well, then, let us read the new poem."

"My dear, you speak so loud."

"I!" and Celeste, gazing reproachfully on Adolphe, perceived, for the first time, something in his eyes that surprised her — she looked again — "Good heavens!" said she to herself, "Adolphe certainly squints!"

On the other hand, Adolphe murmured, "The wart has decidedly grown since the morning!"

It is impossible to say what an effect this fatal discovery had upon Adolphe. He thought of it incessantly. He had nothing else to complain of — but then warts on the chin are certainly not becoming. Celeste's beauty had improved greatly since her marriage. Everybody else saw the improvement. Adolphe saw nothing but the wart on her chin. Her complexion was more brilliant, her form more rounded, her walk more majestic; but what is all this when one has a wart on the chin! The wart seemed to grow bigger and bigger every day — to Adolphe's eyes it threatened speedily to absorb the whole of the face. Nay, he expected, in due time, to see his beautiful Celeste all wart! He smothered his pain as well as he could, because he was naturally well-bred and delicate; and no woman likes to be told of the few little blemishes to which she herself is blind. He smothered his pain, but he began to think it would be just as well to have separate apartments.

Meanwhile, strange to say, Adolphe's squint grew daily more decided and pronounced. "He certainly did not squint before we married," thought Celeste; "it is very unpleasant — it makes one so fidgety to be stared at by a person who sees two ways; and Adolphe has unfortunately a habit of

staring. I think I might venture to hint, delicately and kindly — the habit can't yet be incurable."

As wives are always the first in the emulation of conjugal fault-finding, Celeste resolved to hazard the hint — on the first favourable opportunity.

"Well, my Celeste, I have brought my dog to see you," said Adolphe one morning.

"Ah! down, down! Pray turn him out; see the mark of his paws. I can't bear dogs, Adolphe."

"Poor thing!" said Adolphe, caressing his insulted favourite.

"Was that to me or to the dog?" asked Celeste.

"Oh! to him, to be sure."

"I beg your pardon, my dear, but I thought you looked at me. Indeed, Adolphe, if the truth may be said, you have lately contracted a bad habit — you are getting quite a cast in your eye."

"Madam!" said Adolphe, prodigiously offended, and hurrying to the glass.

"Don't be angry, my love; I would not have mentioned it if it did not get worse every day: it is yet to be cured I am sure: just put a wafer on the tip of your nose, and you will soon see straight."

"A wafer on the tip of my nose! Much better put one at the tip of your chin, Celeste."

"My chin!" cried Celeste, running in her turn to the glass; "what do you mean, sir?"

"Only that you have a very large wart there, which it would be more agreeable to conceal."

"Sir!"

"Madam!"

"A wart on my chin — monster!"

"A cast in my eye — fool!"

"Yes! How could I ever love a man who squinted!"

"Or I a woman with a wart on her chin!"

"Sir, I shall not condescend to notice your insults. To a distorted eyesight everything seems deformed."

"Madam, I despise your insinuations; but since you deny the evidence of your own glass, suffer me to send for a physician. Trust to him for the cure of that wart: Faith can remove mountains."

"Yes, send for a physician; he will say whether you squint or not — poor Adolphe, I am not angry, — no, I pity so melancholy a defect."

Celeste burst into tears. Adolphe, in a rage, seized his hat, mounted his horse, and went himself for the doctor.

The doctor was a philosopher as well as a physician — he took his pony, and ambled back with Adolphe. By the way he extracted from Adolphe his whole history, for men in a passion are easily made garrulous. "The perfidious woman!" said Adolphe, "would you believe it? — we braved everything for each other — never were two persons so much in love — nay, we attempted suicide rather than endure a longer separation. I renounced the

most brilliant marriages for her sake — too happy that she was mine without a dower — and now she declares I squint. And, oh, she has *such* a wart on her chin!"

The doctor could not very well see whether Adolphe squinted, for Adolphe had drawn his hat over his eyes; besides, the doctor prudently thought it best to attend to one malady at a time.

"As to the wart, sir," said he, "it is not difficult to cure."

"But if my wife will not confess that she has it, she will never consent to be cured! I would not mind if she would but own it. O the vanity of women!"

"It must have been after some absence that this little defect was perceived by you —"

"After absence!—we have not been a day separated since we married."

"O-ho," said the doctor, sinking into a reverie: — I have said he was a philosopher — but it did not require much philosophy to know that persons who would have died for each other a few months ago, were not alienated only by a wart on the chin or a cast in the eye.

They arrived at Adolphe's villa — they entered the saloon. Celeste no longer wept; she had put on her most becoming cap, and had the air of an insulted but uncomplaining wife!

"Confess to the wart, Celeste, and I'll forgive all," said Adolphe.

"Nay, why so obstinate as to the cast of the eye? I shall not admire you less, though others may, if you will not be so vain as to disown it."

"Enough, madam — doctor, regard that lady; — is not the wart monstrous — *can* it be cured?"

"Nay," cried Celeste, sobbing, "look rather at my poor husband's squint. His eyes were so fine before we married!"

The doctor put on his spectacles; he regarded first one and then the other.

"Sir," said he, deliberately, "this lady has certainly a pimple on the left of her chin considerably smaller than a pin's head. And, madam, the pupil of your husband's right eye is, like that of nine persons out of ten, the hundredth part of an inch nearer to his nose than the pupil of the left. This is the case, as it appears to me, seeing you both for the first time. But I do not wonder, that you, sir, think the pimple so enormous; and you, madam, the eye so distorted, — since you see each other every day!"

The pair were struck by a secret and simultaneous conviction; — when an express arrived, breathless, to summon Adolphe to his father, who was taken suddenly ill. At the end of three months Adolphe returned. Celeste's wart had entirely

vanished; and Celeste found her husband's eyes were more beautiful than ever.

Taught by experience, they learned then that warts rapidly grow upon chins, and squints readily settle upon eyes, that are too constantly seen; and that it is easy for two persons to die joyfully together when lovers, but prodigiously difficult, without economising the presence, to live comfortably together when married.

ON THE WANT OF SYMPATHY.

THE cherished dream of the young is to meet with a wholly congenial spirit — an echo of the heart — a counterpart of self. Who ever lived that did not hope to find the phantom, and who ever lived that found it? It is the least rational and yet the most stubborn of all our delusions. That which makes up the moral nature of one human being, — its tastes, dispositions, sentiments, objects, aspirations, — is infinitely multiplied and complex; formed from a variety of early circumstances, of imperfect memories, of indistinct associations, of constitutional peculiarities, of things and thoughts appropriate only to itself, and which were never known but partially to others. It is a truism which every one will acknowledge, that no two persons were ever wholly alike; and yet every one in youth recoils from the necessary deduction, that, therefore, he can never find a counterpart of himself. And so we go on, desiring, craving, seeking sympathy to the last! It is a melancholy instance, too, of the perversity of human wishes, that they who exact sympathy the

most are, of all, the least likely to obtain it. For instance, the yearning for sympathy seems inherent in the temperament of the poet. Exactly as he finds his finer and more subtle ideas or feelings uncomprehended by the crowd, he sighs for the Imagined One to whom he can pour them forth, or who can rather understand them best in silence — by an instinct — by a magnetism — by all that invisible and electric harmony of two souls, which we understand by the word "Sympathy," in its fullest and divinest sense. Yet in proportion evidently to the rareness of this poetic nature, is the improbability of finding a likeness to it. And if the poet succeed at last, if he do find another being equally sensitive—equally wayward — equally acute and subtle — instead of sympathising with him, it demands only sympathy for itself. The one most resembling a poet would be a poetess. And a poetess is, of all, the last who could long sympathise with a poet. Two persons linked together, equally self-absorbed, susceptible, and exacting! — Mephistophiles himself could not devise an union more unhappy and more ill-assorted! Some one has observed, that those who are most calculated to bear with genius, to be indulgent to its eccentricities and its infirmities, to foresee and forestall its wishes, to honour it with the charity and the reverence of love, are usually without genius themselves, and of an intellect comparatively mediocre and humble. It is the touching anecdote

of the wife of a man of genius, that she exclaimed on her death-bed, "Ah, my poor friend, when I am no more, who will understand thee?" Yet this woman, who felt she did comprehend the nature with which her life had been linked, was of no correspondent genius. The biography which immortalises her tenderness is silent upon her talents. In fact, there is no real sympathy between the great man and another; but that which supplies its place is the reverent affection of admiration. And I doubt whether the propensity to venerate *persons* be a common faculty of the highest order of mind. Such men know indeed veneration, their souls are imbued with it; but it is not for mortals, over whom they feel their superiority, it is for that which is abstract or spiritual — for Glory or for Virtue, for Wisdom, for Nature, or for God. Even in the greatest men around them, their sight, unhappily too acute, penetrates to the foibles; they measure their fellow-mortals by the standard of their Ideal. They are not blinded by the dazzle of genius, for genius is a thing to them household and familiar. The angels compassionate our frailties, they do not revere our powers. And they who, yet on earth, approach the most to the higher order of spirits behold their brethren from a height; they may stoop from their empyreal air to cherish and to pity, but where they pay the homage of reverence they look not below nor around them but above.

It is in a lower class of intellect, yet one not unelevated as compared with the multitude, that the principle of admiration is most frequent and pervading; an intellect that seeks a monitor, a protector, a standard, or a guide; one that can appreciate greatness, but has no measure within whereby to gauge its proportions. Thus we observe in biography, that the friendship between great men is rarely intimate or permanent: it is a Boswell that most appreciates a Johnson. Genius has no brother, no co-mate; the love it inspires is that of a pupil or a son. Hence, unconscious of the reasons, but by that fine intuition into nature, which surpasses all philosophy, the poets usually demand devotion, as the most necessary attribute in their ideals of love; they ask in their mistress a being, not of lofty intellect, nor of brilliant genius, but engrossed, absorbed in them; — a Medora for the Conrad. It was well to paint that Medora in a savage island, — to exclude her from the world. In civilized life, poor creature! caps and bonnets — an opera-box, and Madame Carson, would soon have shared her heart with her Corsair! Yet this species of love, tender and unearthly though it be, is not sympathy. Conrad could not have confided in Medora. She was the mistress of his heart, not, in the beautiful Arabian phrase, "the keeper of his soul." It is the inferior natures, then, that appreciate, reverence, and even comprehend genius the most; and yet how much is

there that to inferior natures it can never reveal! How can it pour forth all that burning eloquence of passion and memory which often weighs upon it like a burden, to one who will listen to it indeed with rapt ears, but who will long, as Boswell longed, for Mr. Somebody to be present to hear how finely it can talk?

Yet most men have brief passages in life when they fancy they have attained their object; when they cry "Eureka!" — when they believe that their counterpart, the wraith of their spirit, is before them! Two persons in love with each other, how congenial they appear! In that beautiful pliancy, that unconscious system of self-sacrifice which make the character of love in its earlier stages, each nature seems blended and circumfused in each, — they are not two natures, they are one! Seen by that enchanting moonlight of delicious passion — all that is harsh or dissonant is mellowed down: the irregularities, the angles, sleep in shadow; all that we behold is in harmony with ourselves. Then is our slightest thought penetrated, our faintest desire forestalled, our sufferings of mind, or of frame, how delicately are they consoled! Then even sorrow and sickness have their charm, — they bring us closer under the healing wings of our Guardian Spirit. And, fools that we are, we imagine this sympathy is to endure for ever. But TIME — there is the divider! — by little and little, we grow apart

from each other. The daylight of the world creeps in, the moon has vanished, and we see clearly all the jarring lines and sharp corners hidden at first from our survey.

My lost, my buried, my unforgotten! Thou whom I knew in the first fresh years of life — thou who wert snatched from me before one bud of the springtime of youth was blighted — thou, over whose grave, yet a boy, I wept away half the softness of my soul, — now that I know the eternal workings of the world, and the destiny of all human ties, is there no comfort in the thought that custom never dulled the music of thy voice, never stole the magic from thine eyes? As thine image stood before me at the gates of Morning, so before me it will float amidst the shades of Night; its bloom was not fated to wither down into "the portion of weeds and worn-out faces." All else changes as my life journeys restlessly on. That image is evermore unchanged. Hopes fly me one by one, friends vanish into the ranks of foes — thou art beside me still as I saw thee last.

Death is the great treasure-house of Love. There, lies buried the real wealth of passion and of youth; there, the heart, once so prodigal, now grown the miser, turns to contemplate the hoards it has hidden from the world. Henceforth it is but the common and petty coins of affection that it wastes on the uses and things of life.

The coarser and blunter minds, intent upon common objects, obtain, perhaps, a sufficient sympathy to satisfy them. The man who does nothing but hunt, will find congeniality enough wherever there are hounds and huntsmen. The woman whose soul is in a ball-room, has a host of intimate associates and congenial spirits. It was the man of the world who talked of his numerous friends—it was the sage who replied, sadly, "Friends! Has the word a plural? I have never seen but one."

There are two remedies for the craving after sympathy; and the first may be recommended to all literary men as the great means of preserving the moral health. It is this: we should cultivate, besides our more intellectual objects, some pursuit which we can have in common with the crowd. Some end, whether of pleasure, of business, of politics, that brings us in contact with our kind. It is in this that we can readily find a fellowship — in this we can form a vent for our desire of sympathy from others. And thus we learn to feel ourselves not alone. Solitude then becomes to us a relief, and our finer thoughts are the seraphs that watch and haunt it. Our imagination, kept rigidly from the world, is the Eden in which we walk with God. For having in the crowd embraced the crowd's objects, and met with fellowship in return, we no longer desire so keenly a sympathy with that which is not common to others, and belongs to the nobler

part of us. And this brings me to the second remedy. We learn thus to make our own dreams and thoughts our companion, our beloved, our Egeria. We acquire the doctrine of self-dependence, — self suffices to self. In our sleep from the passions of the world, God makes an Eve to us from our own breasts. Yet sometimes it will grieve us to think we shall return to clay, give up the heritage of life, our atoms dissolve and crumble into the elements of new things — with all the most lovely, the most spiritual part of us untold! What volumes can express one tithe that we have felt. How many brilliant thoughts have flashed upon us — how many divinest visions have walked by our side, that would have mocked all our efforts to transfer to the inanimate page? To sit coldly down, to copy the fitful and sudden hues of those rainbow and evanescent images varying with every moment! — no! we are not all so cased in authorship, we are greater than mere machines of terms and periods. The author is inferior to the man! As the best part of Beauty is that which no picture can express,* so the best part of the poet is that which no words have told.

Hard is the thought that, for want of sympathy in those around us, our purest motives, our noblest qualities, must be misunderstood. We die — none

* Bacon.

have known us! and yet all are to declaim on our character — measure at a glance the dark abyss of our souls — prate of us as if we were household and hackneyed to them from our cradle. One amongst the number shall write our biography — the rest shall read, and conceive they know us ever afterwards. We go down to our sons' sons, darkened and disguised; so that, looking on men's colourings of our mind and life, from our repose on the bosom of God, we shall not recognise one feature of the portrait we have left to earth!*

* No essay in the present collection needs more than this such excuse as may be conceded to youth. It appears to have been written when the author was little more than two-and-twenty. The same subject is treated, and it is to be hoped with somewhat sounder judgment, in one of the Essays to be found in 'Caxtoniana.'

ARASMANES, THE SEEKER.

CHAPTER I.

In the broad plains of Chaldæa, and not the least illustrious of those early sages from whom came our first learning of the lights of heaven, the venerable Chosphor saw his age decline into the grave. Upon his death-bed he thus addressed his only son, the young Arasmanes, in whose piety he recognised, even in that gloomy hour, a consolation and a blessing; and for whose growing renown for wisdom and for valour, the faint pulses of expiring life yet beat with paternal pride.

"Arasmanes," said he, "I am about to impart to thee the only secret which, after devoting eighty years to unravel the many mysteries of knowledge, I consider worthy of transmitting to my child. Thou knowest that I have wandered over the distant regions of the world, and have experienced, with all the vicissitudes, some of the triumphs, and many of the pleasures, of life. Learn, from my experience, that earth possesses nothing which can reward the

pursuit, or satisfy the desire. When thou seest the stars shining down upon the waters, thou beholdest an image of the visionary splendours of hope: the light sparkles on the wave; but it neither warms while it glitters, nor can it, for a single instant, arrest the progress of the stream from the dark gulf into which it hastens to merge itself and be lost. It was not till my old age that this conviction grew upon my mind; and about that time I discovered, from one of the sacred books to which my studies were then applied, the secret I am now about to confide to thy ear. Know, my son, that in the extremities of Asia there is a garden in which the Creator of the Universe placed the first parents of mankind. In that garden the sun never sets; nor does the beauty of the seasons wane. *There*, is neither ambition, nor avarice, nor false hope, nor its child, regret. *There*, is neither age nor deformity; diseases are banished from the air; eternal youth, and the serenity of an unbroken happiness, are the prerogative of all things that breathe therein. For a mystic and unknown sin our first parents were banished from this happy clime, and their children scattered over the earth. Superhuman beings are placed at its portals, and clouds and darkness veil it from the eyes of ordinary men. But, to the virtuous and to the bold, there is no banishment from the presence of God; and by them the darkness may be penetrated, the dread guardians

softened, and the portals of the divine land be passed. Thither, then, my son — early persuaded that the rest of earth is paved with sorrow and with care — thither, then, bend thy adventurous way. Fain could I have wished that, in my stronger manhood, when my limbs could have served my will, I had learned this holy secret, and repaired in search of the ancestral clime. Avail thyself of my knowledge; and, in the hope of thy happiness, I shall die contented." The pious son pressed the hand of his sire, and promised obedience to his last command.

"But, oh, my father!" said he, "how shall I know in what direction to steer my course? To this land, who shall be my guide, or what my clue? Can ship, built by mortal hands, anchor at its coast; or can we say to the camel-driver, 'Thou art approaching to the goal?'"

The old man pointed to the east.

"From the east," said he, "dawns the sun — emblem of the progress of the mind's light; from the east comes all of science that we know. Born in its sultry regions, seek only to pierce to its extreme; and, guiding thyself by the stars of heaven ever in one course, reach at last the ADEN that shall reward thy toils."

And Chosphor died, and was buried with his fathers.

After a short interval of mourning, Arasmanes took leave of his friends; and, turning his footsteps to the east, sought the gates of Paradise.

He travelled far and alone, for several weeks; and the stars were his only guides. By degrees, as he advanced, he found that the existence of Aden was more and more acknowledged. Accustomed from his boyhood to the companionship of sages, it was their abodes that he sought in each town or encampment through which he passed. By them his ardour was confirmed; for they all agreed in the dim and remote tradition of some beautiful region in the farthest east, from which the existing races of the earth were banished, and which was jealously guarded from profane approach by the wings of celestial Spirits. But, if he communicated to any one his daring design, he had the mortification to meet only the smile of derision, or the incredulous gaze of wonder: by some he was thought a madman, and by others an impostor. So that, at last, he prudently refrained from revealing his intentions, and contented himself with seeking the knowledge, and listening to the conjectures, of others.

CHAPTER II.

At length the traveller emerged from a mighty forest, through which, for several days, he had threaded his weary way; and beautiful beyond thought was the landscape that broke upon his view. A plain covered with the richest verdure lay before him; through the trees that, here and there, darkened over the emerald sward, were cut alleys, above which hung festoons of many-coloured flowers, whose hues sparkled amidst the glossy foliage, and whose sweets steeped the air as with a bath. A stream, clear as crystal, flowed over golden sands, and, wherever the sward was greenest, gathered itself into delicious fountains, and sent upwards its glittering spray, as if to catch the embraces of the sun, whose beams kissed it in delight.

The wanderer paused in ecstasy; a sense of luxurious rapture, which he had never before experienced, crept into his soul. "Behold!" murmured he, "my task is already done; and Aden, the land of happiness and of youth, lies before me!"

While he thus spake, a sweet voice answered — "Yes, O happy stranger! — thy task is done: this is the land of happiness and of youth!"

He turned, and a maiden of dazzling beauty was by his side. "Enjoy the present," said she, "and so wilt thou defy the future. Ere yet the world was, Love brooded over the unformed shell, till from beneath the shadow of his wings burst forth the life of the young creation. Love, then, is the true God, and whoso serveth him he admits into the mysteries of a temple erected before the stars were formed. Behold! thou enterest now upon the threshold of the temple; thou art in the land of happiness and youth!"

Enchanted with these words, Arasmanes gave himself up to the sweet intoxication they produced upon his soul. He suffered the nymph to lead him deeper into the valley; and now, from a thousand vistas in the wood, trooped forth beings, some of fantastic, some of the most harmonious, shapes. There, were the satyr and the faun, and the youthful Bacchus — mixed with the multiform deities of India, and the wild objects of Egyptian worship; but more numerous than all were the choral nymphs, that spiritualized the reality, by incorporating the dreams, of beauty; and, wherever he looked, one laughing Face seemed to peer forth from the glossy leaves, and to shed over all things, as from its own joyous yet tender aspect, a tenderness and a joy. And he asked how this Being, that seemed to have the power of multiplying itself everywhere, was called? — And its name was Eros.

For a time the length of which he knew not — for in that land no measurement of time was kept — Arasmanes was fully persuaded that it was Aden to which he had attained. He felt his youth as if it were something palpable; everything was new to him; — even in the shape of the leaves, and the whisper of the odorous airs, he found wherewithal to marvel at and admire. Enamoured of the maiden who had first addressed him, at her slightest wish (and she was full of all beautiful caprices) he was ready to explore even the obscurest recess of the valley which now appeared to him unbounded. He never wearied of a single hour. He felt as if weariness were impossible; and, with every instant, he repeated to himself, "In the land of happiness and youth I am a dweller."

One day, as he was conversing with his beloved, and gazing upon her face, he was amazed to behold that, since the last time he had gazed upon it, a wrinkle had planted itself upon the ivory surface of her brow; and, even while half doubting the evidence of his eyes, new wrinkles seemed slowly to form over the forehead, and the transparent roses of her cheek to wane and fade! He concealed, as well as he could, the mortification and wonder that he experienced at this strange phenomenon; and, no longer daring to gaze upon a face from which before he had drunk delight as from a fountain, he sought excuses to separate himself from her, and wan-

dered, confused and bewildered with his own thoughts, into the wood. The fauns, and the dryads, and the youthful face of Bacchus, and the laughing aspect of Eros, came athwart him from time to time; yet the wonder that had clothed them with fascination was dulled within his breast. Nay, he thought the poor wine-god had a certain vulgarity in his air, and he felt an angry impatience at the perpetual gaiety of Eros.

And now, whenever he met his favourite nymph — who was as the queen of the valley — he had the chagrin to perceive that the wrinkles deepened with every time; youth seemed rapidly to desert her; and instead of a maiden scarcely escaped from childhood, it seemed to him that he had been wasting his adoration upon a superannuated harridan.

One day he could not resist saying to her, though with some embarrassment —

"Pray, dearest, is it many years since you have inhabited this valley?"

"Oh, indeed, many!" said she, smiling.

"You are not, then, very young?" rejoined Arasmanes, ungallantly.

"What!" cried the nymph, changing colour — "Do you begin to discover age in my countenance? Has any wrinkle yet appeared upon my brow? You are silent. Oh, cruel Fate! wilt thou not spare me even this lover?" And the poor nymph burst into tears.

"Be consoled," said Arasmanes, painfully, "it is true that time begins to creep upon your charms; but though my love may pass, my friendship shall be eternal."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the nymph, rising, fixed upon him a long, sorrowful look, and then, with a loud cry, vanished from his sight. Thick darkness, as a veil, fell over the plains; the Novelty of life, with its attendant, Poetry, was gone from the wanderer's path for ever.

A sudden sleep crept over his senses. He awoke confused and unrefreshed, and a long and gradual ascent, but over mountains green indeed, and watered by many streams gushing from the heights, stretched before him. Of the valley he had mistaken for Aden not a vestige remained. He was once more on the real earth.

CHAPTER III.

For several days, discontented and unhappy, the young adventurer pursued his course, still seeking only the East, and still endeavouring to console himself for the sweet delusions of the past by hoping an Aden in the future.

The evening was still and clear; the twilight star broke forth over those giant plains — free from the culture and the homes of men, which yet make the character of the eastern and the earlier world; a narrow stream, emerging from a fissure in a small rock covered with moss, sparkled forth under the light of the solemn heavens, and flowed far away, till lost amongst a grove of palms. By the source of this stream sat an aged man and a young female. And the old man was pouring into his daughter's ear — for Azraaph held to Ochtor that holy relationship — the first doctrines of the world's wisdom; those wild but lofty conjectures by which philosophy penetrated into the nature and attributes of God; and reverently the young maiden listened, and meekly shone down the star of eve upon the dark yet lustrous beauty of her earnest countenance.

It was at this moment that a stranger was seen

descending from the hills which bordered the mighty plains; and he, too, worn and tired with long travel, came to the stream to refresh his burning thirst, and lave the dust from his brow.

He was not at first aware of the presence of the old man and the maiden; for they were half concealed beneath the shadow of the rock from which the stream flowed. But the old man, who was one of those early hermits with whom wisdom was the child of solitude, and who, weary of a warring and savage world, had long since retired to a cavern not far from the source of that stream, and dwelt apart with Nature, the memories of a troubled Past, and the contemplation of a mysterious Future, — the old man, I say, accustomed to proffer to the few wanderers that from time to time descended the hills (seeking the cities of the East) the hospitalities of food and shelter, was the first to break the silence.

Arasmanes accepted with thankfulness the offers of the hermit, and that night he became Ochtor's guest. There were many chambers in the cavern, hollowed either by the hand of Nature, or by some early hunters on the hill; and into one of these the old man, after the Chaldæan had refreshed himself with the simple viands of the hermitage, conducted the wanderer: it was covered with dried and fragrant mosses; and the sleep of Arasmanes was long, and he dreamed many cheerful dreams.

When he arose the next morning, he found his

entertainers were not within the cavern. He looked forth, and beheld them once more by the source of the stream, on which shone the morning sun, and round which fluttered the happy wings of the desert birds. The wanderer sought his hosts in a spot on which they were accustomed, each morn and eve, to address the Deity. "Thou dost not purpose to leave us soon," said the hermit; "for he who descends from yon mountains must have traversed a toilsome way, and his limbs will require rest."

Arasmanes, gazing on the beauty of Azraaph, answered, "In truth, did I not fear that I should disturb thy reverent meditations, the cool of thy plains and the quiet of thy cavern, and, more than all, thy converse and kind looks, would persuade me, my father, to remain with thee many days."

"Behold how the wandering birds give life and merriment to the silent stream!" said the sage; "and so to the solitary man are the footsteps of his kind." And Arasmanes sojourned with Ochtor the old man.

CHAPTER IV.

"THIS, then, is thy tale," said Ochtor; "and thou still believest in the visionary Aden of thy father's dreams. Doubtless such a land existed once for our happier sires; or why does tradition preserve it to the race that behold it not? But the shadow wraps it, and the angel guards. Waste not thy life in a pursuit, without a clue, for a goal that thou never mayest attain. Lose not the charm of earth in seeking after the joys of Aden. Tarry with us, my son, in these still retreats. This is the real Aden of which thy father spake; for here comes neither passion nor care. The mortifications and the disappointments of earth fall not upon the recluse. Behold, my daughter hath found favour in thine eyes — she loveth thee — she is beautiful and tender of heart. Tarry with us, my son, and forget the lessons that thy sire, weary of a world which he yet never had the courage to quit, extracted from the false wisdom of Discontent."

"Thou art right, venerable Ochtor," cried Arasmanes with enthusiasm; "give me but thy daughter, and I will ask for no other Aden than these plains."

CHAPTER V.

The sun had six times renewed his course, and Arasmanes still dwelt in the cave of Ochtor. In the fair face of Azraaph he discovered no wrinkles — her innocent love did not pall upon him; the majestic calm of Nature breathed its own tranquillity into his soul, and in the lessons of Ochtor he took a holy delight. He found in his wisdom that which at once stilled the passions and inspired the thoughts. At times, however, and of late more frequently than ever, strong yearnings after the Aden he had so vainly pursued were yet felt. He felt that curse of monotony which is the invariable offspring of quiet.

At the end of the sixth year, as one morning they stood without the door of the cavern, and their herds fed tranquilly around them, a band of men from the western hills came suddenly in view: they were discovered before they had time to consider whether they should conceal themselves; they had no cause, however, for fear — the strangers were desirous only of food and rest.

Foremost of this band was an aged man of majestic mien, and clothed in the richest garments of the east. Loose flowed his purple robe, and bright shone the jewels on the girdle that clasped his sword.

As he advanced to accost Ochtor, upon the countenance of each of the old men grew doubt, astonishment, recognition, and joy. "My brother!" burst from the lips of both, and the old chief fell upon Ochtor's bosom and wept aloud. The brothers remained alone the whole day, and at nightfall they parted with many tears; and Zamielides, the son of the chief (who was with the band), knelt to Ochtor, and Ochtor blessed him.

Now, when all were gone, and Silence once more slept upon the plains, Ochtor went forth alone, and Azraaph said unto her husband, "My father's mind seems disquieted and sad; go forth, I pray thee, my beloved, and comfort him; the dews lie thick upon the grass, and my father is very old."

By the banks of the stream stood Ochtor, and his arms were folded on his breast; the wild horses were heard snorting in the distance, and the zebras came to drink at the wave; and the presence of the beasts made more impressive the solitude of the old man.

"Why art thou disquieted, my father?" said Arasmanes.

"Have I not parted with my near of kin?"

"But thou didst never hope to meet them; and are not thy children left thee?"

Ochtor waved his hand with an unwonted impatience.

"Listen to me, Arasmanes. Know that Zamiel and I were brothers. Young and ardent, each of us aspired to rule our kind, and each of us imagined he

had the qualities that secure command; but mark, *my* arm was the stronger in the field, and *my* brain was the subtler in the council. We toiled and schemed, and rose into repute among our tribe, but Envy was busy with our names. Our herds were seized — we were stripped of our rank — we were degraded to the level of our slaves. Then, disgusted with my race, I left their cities, and in these vast solitudes I forgot ambition in content. But my brother was of more hopeful heart; with a patient brow he veiled the anger he endured. Lo, he hath been rewarded! His hour came — he gathered together his friends in secret — he smote our enemies in the dead of night; and at morning, behold, he was hailed chieftain of the tribe. This night he rides with his son to the king of the City of Golden Palaces, whose daughter that son is about to wed. Had I not weakly renounced my tribe — had I not fled hither, that glorious destiny would have been mine; *I* should have been the monarch of my race, and my daughter have matched with kings. Marvellest thou, now, that I am disquieted, or that my heart is sore within me?"

And Arasmanes saw that the sage had been superior to the world, only while he was sickened of the world.

And Ochtor nourished the discontent he had formed to his dying day; and, within three months from that night, Arasmanes buried him by the source of the solitary stream.

CHAPTER VI.

The death of Ochtor, and his previous confession, deeply affected Arasmanes. He woke as from a long sleep. Solitude had lost its spell; and he perceived that inactivity itself may be the parent of remorse. "If," thought he, "so wise, so profound a mind as that of Ochtor was thus sensible to the memories of ambition — if, on the verge of death, he thus regretted the solitude in which he had buried his years, and felt, upon the first tidings from the great world, that he had wasted the promise and powers of life, how much more accessible should *I* be to such feelings, in the vigour of manhood, and with the one great object which I swore to my father to pursue, unattained, and scarcely attempted! Surely it becomes me to lose no longer time in these houseless wastes; but to rise and gird up my loins, and seek with Azraaph, my wife, for that Aden which we will enter together!"

These thoughts soon ripened into resolve; and not the less so in that, Ochtor being dead, Arasmanes had now no companion for his loftier and more earnest thoughts. Azraaph was beautiful and gentle; but the moment he began to talk about the stars, she unaffectedly yawned in his face. She was quite contented with the solitude, for she knew of

no other world; and the herds and the streamlet, and every old bush around the cavern, were society to her; but her content, as Arasmanes began to discover, was that of ignorance, and not of wisdom.

Azraaph wept bitterly on leaving the cavern; but by degrees, as they travelled slowly on, the novelty of what they saw reconciled her to change; and, except at night, when she was weary of spirit, she ceased to utter her regrets for the stream and the quiet cave. They travelled eastward for several weeks, and met with no living thing by the way, save a few serpents, and a troop of wild horses. At length, one evening, they found themselves in the suburbs of a splendid city. As they approached the gates they drew back, dazzled with the lustre, for the gates were of burnished gold, which shone bright and glittering as they caught a sunny light from the lamps of naphtha that blazed, row upon row, along the mighty walls.

They inquired, as they passed the gates, the name of the city; and they heard, with some surprise, and more joy, that it was termed, "The City of Golden Palaces."

"Here, then, cried Azraaph, "we shall be well received; for the son of my father's brother is wedded to the daughter of the king."

"And here, then, will be many sages," thought Arasmanes, "who will, doubtless, have some knowledge of the site of Aden."

They were much struck, as they proceeded through the streets, with the bustle, and life, and animation, that reigned around, even at that late hour. With the simplicity natural to persons who had lived so long in a desert, they inquired at once for the king's palace. The first time Arasmanes asked the question, it was of a young lord, who, very sumptuously dressed, was treading the streets with great care, lest he should soil the hem of his robe. The young lord looked at him with grave surprise, and passed on. The next person he asked was a rude boor, who was carrying a bundle of wood on his shoulders. The boor laughed in his face; and Arasmanes, indignant at the insult, struck him to the ground. There then came by a judge, and Arasmanes asked him the same question.

"The king's palace!" said the judge; "and what want ye with the king's palace?"

"Behold, the daughter of the king is married to my wife's cousin."

"Thy wife's cousin! Thou art mad to say it; yet stay, thou lookest poor, friend" (here the judge frowned terribly). "Thy garments are scanty and worn. I fancy thou hast neither silver nor gold."

"Thou sayest right," replied Arasmanes; "I have neither."

"Ho, ho!" quoth the judge; "he confesses his guilt; he owns that he has neither silver nor gold. Here, soldiers, seize this man and woman. Away

with them to prison; and let them be brought up for sentence of death to-morrow. We will then decide whether they shall be hanged or starved. The wretches have, positively, neither silver nor gold; and, what is worse, they own it!"

"Is it possible!" cried the crowd; and a shudder of horror crept through the by-standers. "Away with them! — away with them! Long life to Judge Kaly, whose eye never sleeps, and who preserves us for ever from the poor!"

The judge walked on, shedding tears of virtuous delight at the reputation he had acquired.

Arasmanes and Azraaph were hurried off to prison, where Azraaph cried herself to sleep, and Arasmanes, with folded arms and downcast head, indulged his meditations on the notions of crime that seemed so extraordinary to him and so common to the sons of the City of Golden Palaces. They were disturbed the next morning by loud shouts beneath the windows of the prison. Nothing could equal the clamour that they heard; but it seemed the clamour of joy. In fact, that morning the princess who had married Azraaph's cousin had been safely brought to bed of her first child; and great was the joy and the noise throughout the city. Now, it was the custom of that country, whenever any one of the royal family was pleased to augment the population of the world, for the father of the child to go round to all the prisons

in the city, and release the prisoners. How fortunate for Arasmanes and Azraaph, that the princess had been brought to bed before they were hanged!

And, by-and-by, amidst cymbal and psalter, with banners above him and spears around, came the young father to the gaol, in which our unfortunate couple were confined.

"Are there any extraordinary criminals in this prison?" asked the prince, of the head gaoler; for he was studying, at that time, to be affable.

"Only one man, my lord, who was committed last night; and who absolutely confessed in cold blood, and without torture, that he had neither silver nor gold. It is a thousand pities that such a miscreant should be suffered to go free!"

"Thou art right," said the prince; "and what impudence to confess his guilt! I should like to see so remarkable a criminal."

So saying, the prince dismounted, and followed the gaoler to the cell in which Arasmanes and his wife were confined. They recognised their relation at once; for, in that early age of the world, people in trouble had a wonderfully quick memory in recollecting relatives in power. Azraaph ran to throw herself on the prince's neck (which the guards quickly prevented), and the stately Arasmanes began to utter his manly thanks for the visit.

"These people are mad," cried the prince, hastily.

"Release them; but let me escape first." So saying, he ran down stairs so fast that he nearly broke his neck; and then, mounting his horse, pursued his way to the other prisons, amidst the shouts of the people.

Arasmanes and Azraaph were now turned out into the streets. They were exceedingly hungry; and they went into the first baker's shop they saw, and asked the rites of hospitality.

"Certainly; but your money first," said the baker.

Arasmanes, made wise by experience, took care not to reply that he had no money; "But," said he, "I have left it behind me at my lodging. Give me the bread now, and lo, I will repay thee to-morrow."

"Very well," said the baker; "but that sword of thine has a handsome hilt: leave it with me till thou return with the money."

So Arasmanes took the bread, and left the sword.

They were now refreshed, and resolved to hasten from so dangerous a city, when, just as they turned into a narrow street, they were suddenly seized by six soldiers, blindfolded, gagged, and hurried away, whither they knew not. At last they found themselves ascending a flight of stairs. A few moments more, and the bandages were removed from their mouths and eyes, and they saw themselves in a gor-

geous chamber, and alone in the presence of the prince, their cousin.

He embraced them tenderly. "Forgive me," said he, "for appearing to forget you; but it was as much as my reputation was worth in this city to acknowledge relations who confessed they had neither silver nor gold. By the beard of my grandfather! how could you be so imprudent? Do you not know that you are in a country in which the people worship only one deity — the god of the precious metals? Not to have the precious metals is not to have virtue; to confess it, is to be an atheist. No power could have saved you from death, either by hanging or starvation, if the princess, my wife, had not been luckily brought to bed to-day."

"What a strange — what a barbarous country!" said Arasmanes.

"Barbarous!" echoed the prince; "this is the most civilized people in the world, — nay, the whole world acknowledges it. In no country are the people so rich, and, therefore, so happy. For those who have no money it is, indeed, a bad place of residence; for those who have, it is the land of happiness itself. Yes, it is the true Aden."

"Aden! What then, thou, too, hast heard of Aden?"

"Surely! and this is it — the land of freedom — of happiness — of gold!" cried the prince, with enthusiasm; "remain with us and see."

"Without doubt," thought Arasmanes, "this country lies in the far East: it has received me inhospitably at first; but perhaps the danger I escaped was but the type and allegorical truth of the sworded angel of which tradition hath spoken." "But," said he, aloud, "I have no gold, and no silver, O my prince!"

"Heed not that," answered the kind Zamielides: "I have enough for all. You shall be provided for this very day."

"But will not the people recognise me as the poor stranger?"

The prince laughed for several minutes so loudly that they feared he was going into fits.

"What manner of man art thou, Arasmanes?" said he, when he was composed enough to answer; "the people of this city never know what a man has been when he is once rich! Appear to-morrow in purple, and they will never dream that they saw thee yesterday in rags."

CHAPTER VII.

The kind Zamielides, then, conducting his cousins into his own chamber, left them to attire themselves in splendid garments, which he had ordered to be prepared for them. He gave them a palace and large warehouses of merchandise.

"Behold," said he, taking Arasmanes to the top of a mighty tower which overlooked the sea, — "behold yonder ships that rise like a forest of masts from that spacious harbour; the six vessels with the green flags are thine. I will teach thee the mysteries of Trade, and thou wilt soon be as wealthy as myself."

"And what is Trade, my lord?" asked Arasmanes.

"Trade," replied the prince, "is the worship that the people of this country pay to their god."

CHAPTER VIII.

ARASMANES was universally courted; so wise, so charming a person had never appeared in the City of Golden Palaces; and as to the beauty of Azraaph, it was declared the very masterpiece of Nature. Intoxicated with the homage they received, and the splendour in which they lived, their days glided on in a round of luxurious enjoyment.

"Right art thou, O Zamielides!" cried Arasmanes as his ships returned with new treasure; "the City of Golden Palaces is the true Aden."

CHAPTER IX.

ARASMANES had now been three years in the city; and you might perceive that a great change had come over his person: the hues of health had faded from his cheeks: his brow was care-worn — his step slow — his lips compressed. He no longer thought that he lived in the true Aden; and yet for Aden itself he would scarcely have quitted the City of Golden Palaces. Occupied solely with the task of making and spending money, he was consumed with the perpetual fear of losing, and the perpetual anxiety to increase, his stock. He trembled at every darker cloud that swept over the heavens; he turned pale at every ruder billow that agitated the sea. He lived a life of splendid care: and the pleasures which relieved it were wearisome because of their sameness. He saw but little of his once idolised Azraaph. Her pursuits divided her from him. In so civilized a country they could not be always together. If he spoke of his ships, he wearied her to death; if she spoke of the festivals she had adorned, he was equally tired of the account.

CHAPTER X.

THE court was plunged in grief. Zamielides was seized with a fever. All the wise men attended him; but he turned his face to the wall and died. Arasmanes mourned for him more sincerely than any one; for, besides that Arasmanes had great cause to be grateful to him, he knew, also, that if any accident happened to his vessels, he had now no friend willing to supply the loss. This made him more anxious than ever about the safety of his wealth. A year after this event, the new king of the City of Golden Palaces thought fit to go to war. The war lasted four years; and two millions of men were killed on all sides. The second year Arasmanes was at a splendid banquet given at the court. A messenger arrived, panting and breathless. A great battle at sea had been fought. Thirty thousand of the king's subjects had been killed.

"But who won the battle?" cried the king.

"Who but my lord the king?"

The air was rent with shouts of joy.

"One little accident only," continued the herald, "happened the next day. Three of the scattered war-ships of the enemy fell in with the vessels of some of our merchants returning from Ophir, laden

with treasure, and, in revenge, they burned and sunk them."

"Were my ships of the number?" asked Arasmanes, with faltering tongue.

"It was of thy ships that I spoke," answered the messenger.

But nobody thought of Arasmanes, nor of the thirty thousand subjects who were killed. The city was out of its wits with joy that the king had won the victory.

"Alas! I am a ruined man!" said Arasmanes, as he sat with ashes on his head.

"And we can give no more banquets," sighed his wife.

"And everybody will trample upon us," said Arasmanes.

"And we must abandon our palace," groaned the tender Azraaph.

"But one ship remains to me!" cried Arasmanes, starting up; "it is now in port. I will be its captain. I will sail myself with it to Ophir. I will save my fortunes, or perish in the attempt."

"And I will accompany thee, my beloved," exclaimed Azraaph, flinging herself on his neck; "for I cannot bear the pity of the wives whom I have outshone!"

The sea was calm, and the wind favourable, when the unfortunate pair entered their last ship; and, for a whole week, the gossip at court was of the ruin of Arasmanes, and the devotion of his wife.

CHAPTER XI.

They had not been many weeks at sea before an adverse wind set in, which drove them out of their destined course. They were beaten eastward, and, at length, even the oldest and most experienced of the mariners confessed that they had entered seas utterly unknown to them. Worn and wearied, when their water was just out, and their provisions exhausted, they espied land, and, at nightfall, the ship anchored on a green and pleasant shore. The inhabitants, half-naked, and scarcely escaped from the first savage state of nature, ran forth to meet and succour them: by mighty fires the seamen dried their wet garments, and forgot the hardships they had endured. They remained several days with the hospitable savages, repaired their vessel, and replenished its stores. But what especially attracted the notice of Arasmanes, was the sight of some precious diamonds which, set in a rude crown, the chief of the savages wore on his head. He learned from signs easy of interpretation, that these diamonds abounded in a certain island in the farthest East; and that from time to time large fragments of rock in which they were imbedded were cast upon the shore. But

when Arasmanes signified his intention to seek this island, the savages, by gestures of horror and dismay, endeavoured to denote the dangers that attended the enterprise, and to dissuade him from attempting it. Naturally bold, and consumed with his thirst for wealth, these signs made but little impression upon the Chaldæan; and one fair morning he renewed his voyage. Steering perpetually towards the East, and with favouring winds, they came, on the tenth day, in sight of an enormous rock, which shone far down over the waters with so resplendent a glory, as to dazzle the eyes of the seamen. Diamond and ruby, emerald and carbuncle, glittered from the dark soil of the rock, and promised to the heart of the humblest mariner the assurance of illimitable wealth. Never was human joy more ecstatic than that of the crew as the ship neared the coast. The sea was, in this place, narrow and confined; the opposite shore was also in view — black, rugged, and herbless, with pointed rocks, round which the waves sent their white foam on high, guarding its drear approach: little recked they, however, of the opposite shore, as their eyes strained towards "The Island of Precious Stones." They were in the middle of the strait, when suddenly the waters became agitated and convulsed; the vessel rocked to and fro; something glittering appeared beneath the surface; and at length, they distinctly perceived the scales and tail of an enormous serpent.

Thereupon a sudden horror seized the whole crew; they recognised the truth of that tradition, known to all seamen, that in the farthest East lived the vast Snake of the Ocean, whose home no vessel ever approached without destruction. All thought of the diamond rock faded from their souls. They fell at once upon their knees, and poured forth unconscious prayers. But high above all rose the tall form of Arasmanes: little cared he for serpent or tradition. Fame, and fortune, and life, were set upon one cast. "Rouse thee!" said he, spurning the pilot, "or we drive upon the opposite shore. Behold, the island of inexhaustible wealth blazes upon our eyes!"

The words had scarce left his lips, when, with a slow and fearful hiss, the serpent of the eastern seas reared his head from the ocean. Dark and huge as the vastest cavern in which ghoul or Afrite ever dwelt was the abyss of his jaws, and the lurid and terrible eyes outshone even the lustre of the diamond rock.

"I defy thee!" cried Arasmanes, waving his sword above his head; when suddenly the ship whirled round and round; the bold Chaldæan was thrown with violence on the deck; he felt the waters whirl and blacken over him: and then all sense of life deserted him.

When he came to himself, Arasmanes was lying on the hot sands of the shore opposite to the Diamond

Isle; wrecks of the vessel were strewn around him, and here and there the dead bodies of his seamen. But at his feet lay, swollen and distorted, the shape of his beautiful Azraaph, the sea-weeds twisted round her limbs, and the deformed shell-fish crawling over her long hair. And tears crept into the eyes of the Chaldæan, and all his old love for Azraaph returned, and he threw himself down beside her mangled remains, and tore his hair; the schemes of the later years were swept away from his memory like visions, and he remembered only the lone cavern and his adoring bride.

Time rolled on, and Azraaph was buried in the sands; Arasmanes tore himself from the solitary grave, and, striking into the interior of the coast, sought once more to discover the abodes of men. He travelled far and beneath burning suns, and at night he surrounded his resting-place with a circle of fire, for the wild beasts and the mighty serpents were abroad: scant and unwholesome was the food he gleaned from the berries and rank roots that now and then were visible in the drear wastes through which he passed; and in this course of hardship and travail he held commune with his own heart. He felt as if cured for ever of the evil passions. Avarice seemed gone from his breast, and he dreamed that no unholy desire could succeed to its shattered throne.

One day, afar off in the desert, he descried a

glittering cavalcade — glittering it was indeed, for the horsemen were clad in armour of brass and steel, and the hot sun reflected the array like the march of a river of light. Arasmanes paused, and his heart swelled high within him as he heard through the wide plains the martial notes of the trumpet and the gong, and recognised the glory and pomp of war.

The cavalcade swept on; and the chief who rode at the head of the band paused as he surveyed with admiration the noble limbs, and proud stature, and dauntless eye of the Chaldæan. The chief summoned his interpreters; and in that age the languages of the East were but slightly dissimilar; so that the chief of the warriors conversed easily with the adventurer. "Know," said he, "that we are bent upon the most glorious enterprise ever conceived by the sons of men. In the farthest East there is a land of which thy fathers may have informed thee — a land of perpetual happiness and youth, and its name is Aden." Arasmanes started; he could scarcely believe his ears. The warrior continued — "We are of that tribe which lies to the extremities of the East, and this land is therefore a heritage which we, of all the earth, have the right to claim. Several of our youth have at various times attempted to visit it, but supernatural agents have repelled the attempt. Now, therefore, that I have succeeded to the throne of my sires, I have resolved to invade and to con-

quer it by force of arms. Survey my band. Sawest thou ever, O Chaldæan, men of such limbs and stature, of such weapons of offence, and shields of proof? Canst thou conceive men more worthy of such a triumph, or more certain to achieve it? Thou, too, art of proportions beyond the ordinary strength of men — thou art deserving to be one of us. Come, say the word, and the armourers shall clothe thee in steel, and thou shalt ride at my right hand."

The neighing of the steeds, and the clangour of the music, and the proud voice of the chieftain, all inspired the blood of Arasmanes. He thought not of the impiety of the attempt — he thought only of the glory: the object of his whole life seemed placed within his reach. He grasped at the offer of the warrior; and the armourer clad him in steel, and the ostrich plume waved over his brow, and he rode at the right hand of the warrior-king.

CHAPTER XII.

The armament was not without a guide; for, living so near unto the rising of the sun, that which with others was tradition, with them was knowledge; and many amongst them had travelled to the site of Aden, and looked upon the black cloud that veiled it, and trembled at the sound of the rushing but invisible wings that hovered over.

Arasmanes confided to the warrior his whole history; they swore eternal friendship; and the army looked upon the Chaldæan as a man whom God had sent to their assistance. For, strange to say, not one of that army ever seemed to imagine there was aught unholy or profane in the daring enterprise in which he had enlisted: accustomed to consider bloodshed a virtue, where was the crime of winning the gardens of Paradise by force?

Through wastes and deserts the adventurers held their way: and, though their numbers thinned daily by fatigue, and the lack of food, and the breath of the burning winds, they seemed not to relax in their ardour, nor to repine at the calamities they endured.

CHAPTER XIII.

DARKNESS spread solid as a wall! From heaven to earth stretched the ebon Night that was the barrier to the land of Aden. No object gleamed through the impenetrable blackness; from those summitless walls hung no banner; no human champion frowned before the drear approach: all would have been silence, save that, at times, they heard the solemn rush as of some mighty sea; and they knew that it was the rush of the guardian wings.

The army halted before the Darkness, mute and awed; their eyes recoiled from the gloom, and rested upon the towering crest and snowy plumage of their chief. And he bade them light the torches of naphtha that they had brought with them, and unsheath their swords; and, at the given sound, horseman and horse dashed on against the walls of Night. For one instant the torches gleamed and sparkled amidst the darkness, and were then suddenly extinguished; but through the gloom came one gigantic Hand wielding a sword of flame; and, wherever it turned, man smote the nearest man — father perished by his son — and brother fell smitten by the death-stroke of his brother; shrieks and cries, and the trample of affrighted steeds, rang through the riven shade — riven only by that mighty sword as it waved from rank to rank, and the gloom receded from its rays.

CHAPTER XIV.

At eve the work was done; a small remnant of the armament, saved from the general slaughter, lay exhausted upon the ground before the veil of Aden. Arasmanes was the last who lingered in the warring gloom; for, as he struggled to free himself from the rush of the flying and the still heaps of the dead, the darkness had seemed to roll away, and, far into its depths, he caught one glimpse of the wonderful loveliness of Aden. There, over valleys covered with the greenest verdure, and watered by rivers without a wave, basked a purpling and loving sunlight that was peaceful and cloudless, for it was the smile of God. And there, were groups of happy beings scattered around, in whose faces was the serenity of unutterable joy; even at the mere aspect of their happiness, happiness itself was reflected upon the soul of the Chaldæan, despite the dread, the horror, and the desolation of the hour. He stretched out his arms imploringly, and the vision faded for ever from his sight.

CHAPTER XV.

The king and all the principal chiefs of the army were no more; and, with one consent, Arasmanes was raised to command. Sorrowful and dejected, he conducted the humbled remnants of the troop back through the deserts to the land they had so rashly left. Thrice on their return they were attacked by hostile tribes, but by the valour and prudence of Arasmanes they escaped the peril. They arrived at their native city to find that the brother of their perished king had seized the reins of government. The army, who hated him, declared for the stranger-chief who had led them home. And Arasmanes, hurried away by the prospect of power, consented to their will. A battle ensued; the usurper was slain; and Arasmanes, a new usurper, ascended the throne in his stead.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE Chaldæan was no longer young, the hardships he had undergone in the desert had combined with the anxieties that had preyed upon him during his residence in the City of Golden Palaces to plant upon his brow, and in his heart, the furrows of untimely age. He was in the possession of all the sources of enjoyment at that period of life when we can no longer enjoy. Howbeit, he endeavoured to amuse himself by his divan of justice, from which everybody went away dissatisfied, and by his banquets, at which the courtiers complained of his want of magnificence, and the people of his profligate expense. Grown wise by experience, he maintained his crown by flattering his army; and, surrounded by luxury, felt himself supported by power.

There came to the court of Arasmanes a strange traveller; he was a little old man, of plain appearance but great wisdom; in fact, he was one of the most noted sages of the East. His conversation, though melancholy, had the greatest attraction for Arasmanes, who loved to complain to him of the cares of royalty, and the tediousness of his life.

"Ah, how much happier are those in humbler

station!" said the king; "how much happier was I in the desert-cave, tending my herds, and listening to the sweet voice of Azraaph! — Would that I could recall those days!"

"I can enable thee to do so, great king!" said the sage; "behold this mirror; gaze on it whenever thou dost desire to recall the past; and whatever portion of the past thou wouldst summon to thine eyes shall appear before thee."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE sage did not deceive Arasmanes. The mirror reflected all the scenes through which the Chaldæan had passed: now he was at the feet of Chosphor, a happy boy — now with elastic hopes entering into the enchanted valley of the Nymph ere yet he learned how her youth could fade — now he was at the source of the little stream, and gazing on the face of Azraaph by the light of the earliest star; whichever of these scenes he wished to live over again reflected itself vividly in the magic mirror. Surrounded by pomp and luxury in the present, his only solace was in the past.

"Acknowledge that I was right," said he to the sage: "I was much happier in those days; else why so comforted to renew them, though only in the cheat of my mirror?"

"Because, O great king!" said the sage, with a bitter smile, "thou seest them without recalling the feelings thou didst experience as well as the scenes: thou gazest on the past with the feelings that possess thee now, and all that then made the prospect clouded is softened away by time. Judge for thyself if I speak truth." So saying, the sage breathed

over the mirror, and bade Arasmanes look into it once more. He did so. He beheld the same scenes, but the illusion was gone from them. He was a boy once more; but restlessness, and anxiety, and a thousand petty cares at his heart: he was again in the cave with Azraaph, but secretly pining at the wearisome monotony of his life: in all those scenes which he now imagined to have been the happiest, he perceived that he had not enjoyed the *present;* he had been looking forward to the future, and the dream of the unattainable Aden was at his heart. "Alas!" said he, dashing the mirror into pieces, "I was deceived; and thou hast destroyed for me, O sage, even the pleasure of the past!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ARASMANES had never forgotten the brief glimpse of Aden that he obtained in his impious warfare; and, now that the charm was gone from Memory, the wish yet to reach the unconquered land returned more powerfully than ever to his mind. He consulted the sage as to its possibility.

"Thou canst make but one more attempt," answered the wise man; "and in that I cannot assist thee; but one who, when I am gone hence, will visit thee, shall lend thee her aid."

"Cannot the visitor come till thou art gone?" said Arasmanes.

"No, nor until my death," answered the sage.

This reply threw the mind of Arasmanes into great confusion. It was true that he nowhere found so much pleasure as in the company of his friend — it was his only solace; but then, if he could never visit Aden (the object of his whole life) until that friend were dead! — the thought was full of affliction to him. He began to look upon the sage as an enemy, as an obstacle between himself and the possession of his wishes. He inquired every morning into the health of the sage; it seemed most provokingly strong. At length, out of his wish that his friend might die, grew the resolve to put his friend to death. One night the sage was found in his bed a corpse; he had been strangled by order of the king.

CHAPTER XIX.

The very next day, as the king sat in his divan, a great noise was heard without the doors; and, presently, a hag, dressed in white garments of a foreign fashion, and of a hideous and revolting countenance, broke away from the crowd and made up to the king: "They would not let me come to thee, because I am homely and aged," said she in a shrill and discordant voice; "but I have been in a king's court before now —"

"What wantest thou, woman?" said Arasmanes; and as he spake he felt a chill creep to his heart.

"I am that visitor whom the wise man foretold," said she; "and I would talk to thee alone."

Arasmanes felt impelled as by some mighty power which he could not resist; he rose from his throne, the assembly broke up in surprise, and the hag was admitted alone to the royal presence.

"Thou wouldst re-seek Aden, the land of Happiness and Truth?" said she, with a ghastly smile.

"Ay," said the king, and his knees knocked together.

"I will take thee thither."

"And when?"

"To-morrow, if thou wilt!" and the hag laughed aloud.

There was something in the manner, the voice, and the appearance of this creature so disgusting to Arasmanes, that he could brook it no longer. Aden itself seemed not desirable with such a companion and guide.

Without vouchsafing a reply he hastened from the apartment, and commanded his guards to admit the hag no more to the royal presence.

The sleep of Arasmanes that night was unusually profound, nor did he awake on the following day till late at noon. From that hour he felt as if some strange revolution had taken place in his thoughts. He was no longer desirous of seeking Aden: whether or not the apparition of the hag had given him a distaste of Aden itself, certain it was that he felt the desire of his whole life had vanished entirely from his breast; and his only wish now was to enjoy, as long and as heartily as he was able, the pleasures that were within his reach.

"What a fool have I been," said he aloud, "to waste so many years in wishing to leave the earth! Is it only in my old age that I begin to find how much that is agreeable earth can possess?"

"Come, come, come!" cried a shrill voice; and Arasmanes, startled, turned round to behold the terrible face of the hag.

"Come!" said she, stamping her foot; "I am ready to conduct thee to Aden."

"Wretch!" said the king, with quivering lips, "how didst thou baffle my guards? But I will strangle every one of them."

"Thou hast had enough of strangling," answered the crone, with a malignant glare. "Hast thou not strangled thy dearest friend?"

"What! tauntest thou me?" cried the king; and he rushed at the hag with his lifted sabre: the blade cut the air: the hag had shunned the blow; and, at the same moment, coming behind the king, she clasped him round the body, and fixed her long talons in his breast; through the purple robe, through the jewelled vest, pierced those vulture-fangs, and Arasmanes shrieked with terror and pain. The guards rushed in at the sound of his cry.

"Villains!" said he, as the cold drops broke from his brow, "would you leave me here to be murdered? Hew down yon hell hag!"

"We saw her not enter, O king!" said the chief of the guards, amazed; "but she shall now die the death." The soldiers, with one accord, made at the crone, who stood glaring at them like a hunted tigress.

"Fools!" said she, "know that I laugh alike at stone walls and armed men."

They heard the voice — they saw not whence it came — the hag had vanished.

CHAPTER XX.

THE wound which the talons of his horrible visitor had made in the breast of the king refused to heal: it gave him excruciating anguish. The physicians tended him in vain; in vain, too, did the wise men preach patience and hope to him. What incensed him even more than the pain was the insult he had suffered — that so loathsome a wretch should dare to maim the person of so august a king! — the thought was not to be borne. But the more pain the king suffered, the more did he endeavour to court pleasure: life never seemed so charming to him as at the moment when it became an agony. His favourite courtiers, who had been accustomed to flatter his former weakness, and to converse with him about the happiness of Aden, and the possibility of entering it, found that even to broach the subject threw their royal master into a paroxysm of rage. He foamed at the mouth at the name of Aden — he wished, nay, he endeavoured to believe, that there was no such place in the universe.

CHAPTER XXI.

At length one physician, more sanguine than the rest, assured the king that he was able to heal the wound and dispel the pain.

"Know, O king!" said he, "that in the stream of Athron, which runneth through the valley of Mythra, there is a mystic virtue which can cure all the diseases of kings. Thou hast only to enter thy gilded bark, and glide down the stream for the space of twenty roods, scattering thine offering of myrrh and frankincense on the waters, in order to be well once more. Let the king live for ever!"

CHAPTER XXII.

It was a dark, deep, and almost waveless stream; and the courtiers, and the women, and the guards, and the wise men, gathered round the banks; and the king, leaning on the physician, ascended his gilded bark; and the physician alone entered the vessel with him. "For," said he, "the god of the stream loves it not to be profaned by the vulgar crowd; it is only for kings that it possesses its healing virtue."

So the king reclined in the middle of the vessel, and the physician took the censer reeking with precious odours; and the bark drifted down the stream, as the crowd wept and prayed upon the shore.

"Either my eyes deceive me," said the king, faintly, "or the stream seems to expand super-naturally, as into a great sea, and the shores on either side fade into distance."

"It is so," answered the physician. "And seest thou yon arch of black rocks flung over the tide?"

"Ay," answered the king.

"It is the approach to the land thou hast so often desired to reach: it is the entrance into Aden."

"Dog!" cried the king, passionately, "name not to me that hateful word."

As he spoke, the figure of the false physician shrunk in size; his robes fell from him, — and the king beheld in his stead the dwarfish shape of the accursed hag.

On drifted the vessel; and the crowd on the banks now beheld the hag seize the king in a close embrace: his shriek was wafted over the water, while the gorgeous vessel with its silken streamers and gilded sides sped rapidly through the black arch of rocks: as the bark vanished, the chasm of the arch closed in, and the rocks, uniting, presented a solid barrier to their gaze. But they shudderingly heard the ghastly laugh of the hag, piercing through the barrier, as she uttered the one word — "NEVER!" And from that hour the king was seen no more.

And this is the true history of Arasmanes, the Chaldæan.

ON ILL HEALTH, AND ITS CONSOLATIONS.

We do not enough consider our physical state as the cause of much of our moral — we do not reflect enough upon our outward selves: — What changes have been produced in our minds by some external cause — an accident — an illness! For instance, a general state of physical debility — ILL HEALTH in the ordinary phrase — is perhaps among the most interesting subjects whereon to moralise. It is not, like most topics that are dedicated to philosophy, refining and abstruse; it is not a closet thesis — it does not touch *one* man, and avoid the circle which surrounds him; — it relates to us all — for ill health is a part of Death; — it is its grand commencement. Sooner or later, for a longer period or a shorter, it is our common doom. Some, indeed, are stricken suddenly, and perceptible disease does not herald the dread comer; but such exceptions are not to be classed against the rule; and in this artificial existence, afflicted by the vices of custom — the unknown infirmities of our sires — the various ills that

beset all men who think or toil — the straining nerve — the heated air — the overwrought or the stagnant life — the cares of poverty — the luxuries of wealth — the gnawings of our several passions, — the string cracks somewhere, and few of us pass even the first golden gates of Life ere we receive the admonitions of Decay. "Every contingency to every man and every creature doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old Sexton Time throws up the earth and digs a grave where we must lay our sins, or our sorrows." *

Life itself is but a long dying, and with every struggle against disease "we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which Death fed on all night when we lay on his lap, and slept in his outer chambers." **

As the beautiful mind of Tully taught itself to regard the evils of Old Age, by fairly facing its approach, and weighing its sufferings against its consolations, so, with respect to habitual infirmities, we may the better bear them by recollecting that they are not without their solace. Every one of us must have observed that during a lengthened illness the mind acquires the habit of making to itself a thousand sources of interest — "a thousand images of

* Jeremy Taylor on 'Holy Dying.'
** Ibid.

one that was" — out of that quiet monotony which seems so unvaried to ordinary eyes. We grow usually far more susceptible to commonplace impressions: — As one whose eyes are touched by a fairy spell, a new world opens to us out of the surface of the tritest things. Every day we discover new objects, and grow delighted with our progress. I remember a friend of mine — a man of lively and impetuous imagination — who, being afflicted with a disease which demanded the most perfect composure,—not being allowed to read, write, and very rarely to converse, — found an inexhaustible mine of diversion in an old marble chimney-piece, in which the veins, irregularly streaked, furnished forth quaint and broken likenesses to men, animals, trees, &c. He declared that, by degrees, he awoke every morning with an object before him, and his imagination betook itself instantly to its new realm of discovery. This instance of the strange power of the mind, to create for itself an interest in the narrowest circles to which it may be confined, may be ludicrous, but is not exaggerated. How many of us have watched for hours, with half-shut eyes, the embers of the restless fire!—nay, counted the flowers upon the curtains of the sick-bed, and found an interest in the task! The mind has no native soil; its affections are not confined to one spot; its dispositions fasten themselves everywhere, — they live, they thrive, they produce, in whatsoever region

Chance may cast them, howsoever remote from their accustomed realm. God made the human heart weak, but elastic; it hath a strange power of turning poison into nutriment. Banish us the air of heaven — cripple the step — bind us to the sick couch — cut us off from the cheerful face of man — make us keep house with Danger and with Darkness — we can yet play with our own fancies, and, after the first bitterness of the physical thraldom, feel that, despite of it, we are free!

It has been my lot to endure frequent visitations of ill health, although my muscular frame is not incapable of bearing great privation and almost any exertion of mere bodily fatigue. The reason is that I reside principally in London; and it is only of late that I have been able to inure myself to the close air and the want of exercise which belong to the life of cities. However languishing in the confinement of a metropolis, the moment I left the dull walls, and heard the fresh waving of the trees, I revived, — the nerves grew firm — pain fled me — I asked myself in wonder for my ailments! My bodily state was, then, voluntary and self-incurred, for nothing bound or binds me to cities: I follow no calling, I am independent of men, sufficiently affluent in means, and, from my youth upward, I have taught myself the power to live alone. Why not then consult health as the greatest of earthly goods? But is health the greatest of earthly goods? Is the

body to be our main care? Are we to be the minions of self? Are we to make *any* corporeal advantage the chief end —

"Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas?"

I confess that I see not how men can arrogate to themselves the catholic boast of Immortal Hopes — how they can utter the old truths of the nothingness of life, of the superiority of mental over physical delights, of the paramount influence of the soul and the soul's objects — and yet speak of health as our *greatest* blessing, and the workman's charge of filling up the crannies of this fast mouldering clay as the most necessary of human objects. Assuredly health is a *great* blessing, and its care is not to be despised; but there are duties far more sacred, — obligations before which the body is as nought. For it is not necessary to live, but it *is* necessary to live nobly! And of this truth we are not without the support of high examples. Who can read the great poet "who sung of heaven," and forget that his acts walked level with the lofty eminence of his genius, that he paid "no homage to the sun," that even the blessing of light itself was a *luxury*, willingly to be abandoned; but the defence of the great rights of earth, the fulfilment of the solemn trust of nations, the vindication of ages yet to come, was a *necessity*, and not to be avoided — and wherefore? because it was

a duty! Are there not duties too to *us*, though upon a narrower scale, which require no less generous a devotion? Are there not objects which are more important than the ease and welfare of the body? Is our first great charge that of being a nurse to ourselves? No: every one of us who writes, toils, or actively serves the state, forms to himself, if he know anything of public virtue, interests which are not to be renounced for the purchase of a calmer pulse, and a few years added to the feeble extreme of life. Many of us have neither fortune, nor power, nor extrinsic offerings to sacrifice to mankind; but all of us — the proud, the humble, the rich, the poor — have one possession at our command; — we may sacrifice ourselves! It is from these reasons that, at the time I refer to, I put aside the care for health; — a good earnestly indeed to be coveted, but which, if obtained only by a life remote from man, inactive, useless, self-revolving, may be too dearly bought: and gazing on the evil which I imagined (though erroneously) I could not cure, I endeavoured to reconcile myself to its necessity.

And first it seems to me that, when the nerves are somewhat weakened, the senses of sympathy are more keen — we are less negligent of our kind: — that impetuous and reckless buoyancy of spirit which mostly accompanies a hardy and iron frame is not made to enter into the infirmities of others. How

can it sympathise with what it has never known? We seldom find men of great animal health and power possessed of much delicacy of mind; their humanity and kindness proceed from an overflow of spirits — their more genial virtues are often but skin-deep, and the result of good-humour. The susceptible frame of women causes each more kindly and generous feeling to vibrate more powerfully on their hearts, and thus also that which in our harsher sex sharpens the nerve, often softens the affection. And this is really the cause of that increased tendency to pity, to charity, to friendship, which comes on with the decline of life, and to which Bolingbroke has so touchingly alluded. There is an excitement in the consciousness of the glorious possession of unshaken health and matured strength which hurries us on the road of that selfish enjoyment, which we are proud of our privilege to command. The passions of the soul are often winged by our animal capacities, and are fed from the same sources that keep the beating of the heart strong, and the step haughty upon the earth. Thus, when the frame declines, and the race of the strong can be run no more, the Mind falls gently back upon itself — it releases its garments from the grasp of the Passions which have lost their charm — intellectual objects become more precious, and, no longer sufficing to be a world to ourselves, we contract the soft habit of leaning our affection upon others; the ties round

our heart are felt with a more close endearment, and every little tenderness we receive from the love of those about us teaches us the value of love. And this is therefore among the consolations of ill health, that we are more susceptible to all the kindlier emotions, and that we drink a deeper and a sweeter pleasure from the attachment of our friends. If, too, we become, as we gradually slacken in the desire of external pursuits, more devoted to intellectual objects, new sources of delight are thus bestowed upon us. Books become more eloquent of language, and their aspect grows welcome as the face of some dear consoler. Perhaps no epicure of the world's coarse allurement knows that degree of deep and serene enjoyment with which, shut up in our tranquil chambers, we surround ourselves with the wisdom, the poetry, the romance of past ages, and are made free by the Sibyl of the world's knowledge, to the Elysium of departed souls. The pain, or the fever, that from time to time reminds us of our clay, brings not perhaps more frequent and embarrassing interruptions, than the restlessness and eager passion which belong to the flush of health. Contented to repose — the repose becomes more prodigal of dreams.

And there is another circumstance usually attendant on ill health. We live less for the world — we do not extend the circle of friendship into the wide and distracting orbit of common acquaintance; we

are thus less subject to ungenial interruptions — to vulgar humiliations — to the wear and tear of mind — the harassment and the vanity, — that torture those who seek after the "gallery of painted pictures," and "the talk where no love is." The gawd and the ostentation shrink into their true colours before the eye which has been taught to look within. And the pulses that have been calmed by pain, keep, without much effort, to the even tenor of philosophy. Thus ill health may save us from many disquietudes and errors, from frequent mortification, and "the walking after the vain shadow." Plato retired to his cave to be wise; sickness is often the moral cave, with its quiet, its darkness, and its solitude.

I may add also, that he who has been taught the precariousness of life acquires a knowledge of its value. He teaches himself to regard Death with a tranquil eye, and habit gifts him with a fortitude mightier than the philosophy of the Porch. As the lamb is shorn, so the wind is tempered. Nor is the calm without moments of mere animal ecstacy unknown to the rude health, which, having never waned from its vigour, is unconscious of the treasure it inherits. What rapture in the first steps to recovery — in the buoyant intervals of release! When the wise simplicity of Hesiod would express the overpowering joy of a bridegroom, in the flush of conquest hastening to the first embraces of his bride, he can compare him only to one escaped from some

painful disease, or from the chains of a dungeon. The release of pain is the excess of transport. With what gratitude we feel the first return of health — the first budding forth of the new spring that has dawned within us! Or, if our disease admit not that blessed regeneration, still it has its intervals and reprieves: moments, when the Mind springs up as the lark to heaven, singing and rejoicing as it bathes its plumage in the intoxicating air. So that our state may be of habitual tranquillity, and yet not insensible to pleasures which have no parallel in the turmoil of more envied lives. But I hold that the great counterbalancing gift which the infirmity of the body, if rightly moralised upon, has the privilege to confer, is, that the mind, left free to contemplation, naturally prefers the high and the immortal to the sensual and the low. As astronomy took its rise among the Chaldæan shepherds, whose constant leisure upon their vast and level plains enabled them to elevate their attention undivided to the heavenly bodies, — so the time left to us for contemplation in our hours of sickness, and our necessary disengagement from the things of earth, tend to direct our thoughts to the stars, and guide us half unconsciously to the Science of Heaven.

Thus while, as I have said, our affections become more gentle, our souls also become more noble, and our desires more pure. We learn to think that "earth is an hospital, not an inn — a place to die,

not live in." Our existence becomes a great preparation for death, and the monitor within us is constant, but with a sweet and a cheering voice.

Such are the thoughts with which in the hour of sickness I taught myself to regard what with the vulgar is the greatest of human calamities! It may be some consolation to those who have suffered more bitterly than I have done, to feel that, by calling in the powers of the mind, there may be good ends and cheerful hopes wrought out from the wasting of the body; and that it is only the darkness — unconsidered and unexplored — which shapes the spectre, and appals us with the fear.

ON SATIETY.

Moralists are wrong when they preach indiscriminately against Satiety and denounce the sated. There is a species of satiety which is productive of wisdom. When Pleasure palls, Philosophy begins. I doubt whether men ever thoroughly attain to knowledge of the world, until they have gone through its attractions and allurements. Experience is not acquired by the spectator of life, but by its actor. It was not by contemplating the fortunes of others, but by the remembrance of his own, that the wisest of mortals felt that "All is vanity." A true and practical philosophy, not of books alone, but of mankind, is acquired by the passions as well as by the reason. The Temple of the Science is approached by the garden as well as by the desert; and a healing spirit is distilled from the rose-leaves which withered in our hand.

A certain sentiment of satiety, of the vanity of human pleasures, of the *labor ineptiarum*, of the nothingness of trite and vulgar occupations, is often the best preparation to that sober yet elevated view

of the ends of life, which *is* Philosophy. As many have blessed the bed of sickness on which they had leisure to contemplate their past existence, and to form an improved chart of the future voyage — so there is a sickness of the soul, when exhaustion itself is salutary, and out of the languor and the tædium we extract the seeds of the moral regeneration. Much of what is most indulgent in Morals — much of what is most tender and profound in Poetry, have come from a sated spirit. The disappointments of an enthusiastic and fervent heart have great teaching in their pathos. As the first converts to the Gospel were among the unfortunate and the erring — so the men who have known most the fallacies of our human nature are, perhaps, those the most inclined to foster the aspirations of the spiritual. To the one Faust who found a comrade in the Fiend, there are a thousand who are visited by the Angel.

The more civilized, the more refined, becomes the period in which we are cast, the more are we subject to satiety —

> "That weariness of all
> We meet, or feel, or hear, or see."

The even road of existence, the routine of nothings, the smooth and silken indolence, which are destined to those among us who, wealthy and well-born, have no occupation in life but the effort to live at ease, produce on the subject the same royalty of

discontent that was once the attribute of a king. In a free and a prosperous country, all who are rich and idle are as kings. We have the same splendid monotony and unvarying spectacle of repeated pageants of which the victims of a court complain. All polite society has become a court, and we pass our lives, like Madame de Maintenon, in seeking to amuse those who cannot be amused; or, like Louis XIV., in seeking to be amused by those who cannot amuse us. Satiety is, therefore, the common and catholic curse of the idle portion of a highly civilized community. And the inequalities of life are fittingly adjusted. For those who are excluded from pleasure in the one extreme, there are those who are incapable of pleasure in the other. The fogs gather dull and cheerless over the base of the mountain, but the air at the summit exhausts and withers.

Yet the poor have their satiety no less than the wealthy — the satiety of toil and the conviction of its hopelessness. "Picture to yourself," wrote a mechanic once to me, "a man, sensible that he is made for something better than to labour and to die, cursed with a desire of knowledge, while occupied only with the task to live; drudging on from year to year to render himself above the necessity of drudgery; to feel his soul out of the clutches of want; to enable him to indulge at ease in the luxury of becoming better and wiser; — picture to yourself such a man, with such an ambition, finding every effort in vain,

seeing that the utmost he can do is to provide for the day, and so from day to day to live battling against the morrow. With what heart can he give himself up at night to unproductive tasks? Scarcely is he lost for a moment, amidst the wonders of knowledge for the first time presented to him, ere the voice of his children disturbs and brings him back to the world — the debt unpaid — the bill dishonoured — the demands upon the Saturday's wages. Oh, sir, in such moments, none can feel how great is our disgust at life, how jaded and how weary we feel; — we recoil alike from amusement and knowledge — we sicken at the doom to which we are compelled — we are as weary of the sun as the idlest rich man in the land — we share his prerogative of satiety, and long for the rest in the green bed where our forefathers sleep, released for ever from the tooth of unrelenting cares."

The writer of this was a poet — let me hope that there are not many of his order condemned with him to a spirit out of harmony with its lot. Yet, as knowledge widens its circle, the number will increase; and if our social system is to remain always the same, I doubt whether the desire of knowledge, which is the desire of leisure, will be a blessing to those who are everlastingly condemned to toil.

But the satiety of the rich has its cure in what is the very curse of the poor. Their satiety is from indolence, and its cure is action. Satiety with them

is chiefly the offspring of a restless imagination and a stagnant intellect. Their minds are employed on trifles, in which their feelings cease to take an interest. It is not the frivolous who feel satiety, it is a better order of spirits fated to have no other occupation than frivolities. The French memoir-writers, who evince so much talent wasted away in a life of trifles, present the most melancholy pictures we possess of satiety and of the more gloomy wisdom of apathy in which it sometimes ends. The flowers of the heart run to seed. Madame D'Epinay has expressed this briefly and beautifully: — "Le cœur se blase, les ressorts se brisent, et l'on finit, je crois, par n'être plus sensible à rien."

That fearful prostration of the mind, that torpor of the affections, that utter hopeless indifference to all things —

> "Full little can he tell who hath not tried
> What hell it is!"

To rise and see through the long day no object that can interest, no pleasure that can amuse — with a heart perpetually craving for excitement to pass mechanically through the round of unexcitable occupations — to make an enemy of Time — to count the moments of his march — to be his captive in the prison-house — to foresee no deliverer but death — to fulfil the taskwork assigned to us with as little of self-will and emotion as an automaton

wound up for the hour — to live in the bustling world as the soul lives in a dream, its volition annulled, and the forms that pass unsummoned before its eye, fulfilling no recognised purpose, and bequeathing no distinct reminiscence; — the deep and crushing melancholy of such a state let no happier being venture to despise.

It is usually after some sudden pause in the passions that we are thus afflicted. The winds drop, and the leaf they whirled aloft rots upon the ground. It is the dread close of disappointed love, or of baffled ambition. Who has ever analysed the anguish of love when it discovers the worthlessness of its object, and retreats gloomily into itself, without enlarging on the weariness that succeeds to the first outburst of grief? So with ambition — the retirement of a statesman before his time is perhaps the worst punishment that his enemies could inflict on him. "Damien's bed of steel" had tortures less lingering than many a hero has found on his bed of laurels withered; the gloomy exile of Swift, fretting out his heart, "as a rat in a cage;" the spectre of Olivares — the petulance of Napoleon wrestling with his gaoler upon a fashion in tea-cups; — what mournful parodies of the dignity of human honours! Between the past glory and the posthumous renown, how awful an interlude! The unwilling rest to a long-continued excitement is the most desolate kind of solitude.

But happy they on whom the curse of satiety falls early, and before the heart has exhausted its resources; when we can yet contend against the lethargy ere it becomes a habit, and allow satiety to extend only to the trifles of life, and not to its great objects; when we are wearied only of the lighter pleasures, and can turn to the more grave pursuits; and the discontent of the imagination is the spur to the intellect. Satiety is the heritage of the heart, not of the reason: and the reason properly invoked possesses in itself the genii to dissolve the charm and awake the sleeper. For he alone, who thoroughly convinces himself that he has duties to perform — that his centre of being is in the world and not in himself — can conquer that most absorbing variety of egotism which indulges in the weariness of life. The objects confined to self having lost all interest, he may yet find new and inexhaustible objects in the relations that he holds to others. Duty has pleasures which know no satiety. The weariness thus known and thus removed begets the philosophy I referred to in the commencement of these remarks. For wisdom is the true phœnix, and never rises but from the ashes of a former existence of the mind. Then perhaps, too, as we learn a proper estimate of the pleasures of this life, we learn also from those yearnings of our inward soul, never satisfied below, a fresh evidence of our ultimate destinies: a consolation which preacher and poet have

often deduced from our disappointments — contending that our perpetual desire for something unattainable here, betokens and prophesies a possession in the objects of a hereafter — so that life itself is but one expectation of eternity. As birds, born in a cage from which they had never known release, would still flutter against the bars, and, in the instinct of their unconquered nature, long for the untried and pathless air which they behold through their narrow grating; — so, pent in our cage of clay, the diviner instinct is not dead within us; at times we sicken with indistinct and undefinable apprehensions of a more noble birthright — and the soul feels stirringly that its wings, which it does but bruise in its dungeon-tenement, were designed by the Creator, who shapes all things to their uses, for the enjoyment of the royalties of heaven.

CHAIROLAS.

CHAPTER I.

Once upon a time there existed a kingdom called Paida, stretching to the west of that wide tract of land known to certain ancient travellers by the name of Callipaga. The heirs apparent to the throne of this kingdom were submitted to a very singular ordeal. At the extremity of the empire was a chain of mountains, separating Paida from an immense region, the chart of which no geographer had ever drawn. Various and contradictory were all the accounts of this region, from the eldest to the latest time. According to some it was the haunt of robbers and demons; every valley was beset with danger; the fruits of every tree were poisonous; and evil spirits lurked in every path, sometimes to fascinate, and sometimes to terrify, the inexperienced traveller to his destruction. Others, on the contrary, asserted that no land on earth equalled the beauty and the treasures of this mystic region. The purest air circulated over the divinest landscapes; the inhabitants were beneficent genii; and the life they led was that

of happiness without alloy, and excitement without satiety. At the age of twenty the heir to the throne was ordained, by immemorial custom, to penetrate alone into this debated and enigmatical realm. It was supposed to require three years to traverse the whole of it, nor was it until this grand tour for the royalty of Paida was completed, that the adventurer was permitted to return home and aspire to the heritage of the crown. It happened, however, that a considerable proportion of these travellers never again re-entered their native land — detained, according to some, by the beautiful fairies of the unknown region; or, according to others, sacrificed by its fiends. One might imagine that those princes who were fortunate enough to return, travellers too respectable to be addicted to gratuitous invention, would have been enabled by their testimony to reconcile the various reports of the country into which they had penetrated. But after their return the austere habits of royalty compelled them to discretion and reserve; and the hints which had escaped them from time to time, when conversing with their more confidential courtiers, so far from elucidating, confirmed the mystery; for each of the princes had evidently met with a different fortune: with one the reminiscences bequeathed by his journey seemed brilliant and delightful; while, perhaps, with his successor, the unknown region was never alluded to without a shudder or a sigh. Thus the only persons who could have reconciled conflicting rumours were

exactly those who the most kept alive the debate; and the empire was still divided into two parties, who, according to the bias of their several dispositions, represented the neighbouring territory as an Elysium or a Tartarus.

The present monarch had of course undergone the customary ordeal. Naturally bold and cheerful, he had commenced his eventful journey with eagerness and hope, and had returned to Paida an altered and melancholy man. He swayed his people with great ability and success, he entered into all the occupations of his rank, and did not reject its pleasures and its pomps; but it was evident that his heart was not with his pursuits. He was a prey to some secret regret; but, whether he sighed to regain the land he had left, or was saddened by the adventures he had known in it, was a matter of doubt and curiosity even to his queen. Several years of his wedded life were passed without promise of an heir, and the eyes of the people were already turned to the eldest nephew of the sovereign, when it was formally announced to the court that the queen had been graciously pleased to become in the family-way.

In due process of time a son made his appearance. He was declared a prodigy of beauty, and there was something remarkably regal in the impatience of his cries. Nothing could exceed the joy of the court, unless it was the grief of the king's eldest nephew. The king himself, indeed, was perhaps also an exception to the general rapture; he

looked wistfully on the crimson cheeks of his first-born, and muttered to himself, "These boys are a great subject of anxiety."

"And of pride," said a small sweet voice that came from the cradle.

The king was startled — for even in Paida a king's son does not speak as soon as he is born: he looked again at the little prince's face — it was not from him that the voice came, his royal highness had just fallen asleep.

"Dost thou not behold me, O king?" said the voice again.

And now the monarch beheld upon the pillow a small creature scarcely taller than a needle, but whose shape was modelled in the most beautiful proportions of manhood.

"Know," continued the apparition, while the king remained silent with consternation, "that I am the good Genius of the new-born; each mortal hath at his birth his guardian spirit, though the Genius be rarely visible. I bring to thy son the three richest gifts that can be bestowed upon man; but, alas! they are difficult to preserve — teach him to guard them as his most precious treasure."

The Genius vanished. The king recovered from his amaze, and, expecting to find some jewels of enormous value, hastily removed the coverlid, and saw by the side of his child an eagle's feather, a pigeon's feather, and a little tuft of the down of a swan.

CHAPTER II.

The prince grew up strong, handsome, and graceful; he evinced the most amiable dispositions; he had much of that tender and romantic enthusiasm which we call Sentiment, and which serves to render the virtues so lovely; he had an intuitive admiration for all that is daring and noble; and his ambition would, perhaps, have led him into dangerous excesses were it not curbed, or purified, by a singular disinterestedness and benevolence of disposition, which rendered him fearful to injure and anxious to serve those with whom he came into contact. The union of such qualities was calculated to conduct him to glory, but to render him scrupulous as to its means; his desire to elevate himself was strong, but it was blended with a stronger wish to promote the welfare of others. Princes of this nature were not common in Paida, and the people looked with the most sanguine hopes to the prospect of his reign. He had, however, some little drawbacks to the effect of his good qualities. His susceptibilities made him too easy with his friends, and somewhat too bashful with strangers; with the one he found it difficult to refuse anything, with the other he was too keenly

alive to ridicule and the fear of shame. But the first was a failing very easily forgiven at a court, and the second was one that a court would, in all probability, correct. The king took considerable pains with the prince's education, his talents were great, and he easily mastered whatever he undertook; but at each proof of the sweetness of his disposition, or the keenness of his abilities, the good king seemed to feel rather alarm than gratification. "Alas!" he would mutter to himself, "that fatal region — that perilous ordeal!" and then turn hastily away.

These words fed the prince's curiosity without much exciting his fear. The journey presented nothing terrible to his mind, for the courtiers, according to their wont, deemed it disloyal to report to him any but the most flattering accounts of the land he was to visit; and he attributed the broken expressions of his father partly to the melancholy of his constitution, and partly to the over-acuteness of paternal anxiety. For the rest, it was a pleasant thing to get rid of his tutors and the formalities of a court; and with him, as with all the young, hope was an element in which fear could not breathe. He longed for his twentieth year, and forgot to enjoy the pleasures of boyhood in his anticipation of the excitements of youth.

CHAPTER III.

The fatal time arrived; the Prince Chairolas had taken leave of his weeping mother — embraced his friends — and was receiving the last injunctions of his father, while his horses impatiently snorted at the gates of the palace.

"My son," said the king, with more than his usual gravity, "from the journey you are about to make you are nearly sure of returning a wiser man, but you may not return a better one. The three charms which you have always worn about your person you must be careful to preserve." Here the king for the first time acquainted the wondering prince with the visit to his infant pillow, and repeated the words of the guardian spirit. Chairolas had always felt a lively curiosity to know why, from his infancy, he had been compelled to wear about his royal person three things so apparently worthless as an eagle's feather, a pigeon's feather, and the tuft of a swan's down, and still more why such seeming trifles had been gorgeously set in jewels. The secret now made known to him elevated his self-esteem; he was evidently, then, a favourite with the superior

powers, and marked from his birth for no ordinary destinies.

"Alas!" concluded the king, "had I received such talismans, perhaps —" he broke off abruptly, once more embraced his son, and hastened to shroud his meditations in the interior of his palace.

Meanwhile the prince set out upon his journey. The sound of the wind-instruments upon which his guards played cheerily, the caracoles of his favourite charger, the excitement of the fresh air, the sense of liberty, and the hope of adventure — all conspired to elevate his spirits. He forgot father, mother, and home. Never was journey undertaken under gayer presentiments, or by a more joyous mind.

CHAPTER IV.

At length the prince arrived at the spot where his attendants were to quit him. It was the entrance of a narrow defile through precipitous and lofty mountains. Wild trees of luxuriant foliage grew thickly along the path. It seemed a primæval vale, desolate even in its beauty, as though man had never trodden it before. The prince paused for a moment, his friends and followers gathered round him with their adieus, and tears, and wishes, but still Hope animated and inspired him; he waved his hand gaily, spurred his steed, and the trees soon concealed his form from the gaze of his retinue.

He proceeded for some time with slowness and difficulty, so entangled was the soil by its matted herbage, so obstructed was the path by the interlaced and sweeping boughs. At length, towards evening, the ground became more open; and, descending a gentle hill, a green and lovely plain spread itself before him. It was intersected by rivulets, and variegated with every species of plant and tree; it was a garden in which Nature seemed to have shown how well she can dispense with Art.

The prince would have been very much enchanted if he had not begun to be very hungry; and, for the first time, he recollected that it was possible to be starved. He looked round anxiously, but vainly, for some sign of habitation, and then he regarded the trees to see if they bore fruit; but, alas! it was the spring of the year, and he could only console himself with observing that the abundance of the blossoms promised plenty of fruit for the autumn, — a long time for a prince to wait for his dinner!

He still, however, continued to proceed, when suddenly he came upon a beaten track, evidently made by art. His horse neighed as its hoofs rang upon the hardened soil, and, breaking of itself into a quicker pace, soon came to a wide arcade overhung with roses. "This must conduct to some mansion," thought Chairolas.

But night came on, and still the prince was in the arcade; the stars, peeping through, here and there served to guide his course, until at length lights, more earthly and more brilliant, broke upon him. The arcade ceased, and Chairolas found himself at the gates of a mighty city, over whose terraces, rising one above the other, the moon shone bright and still.

"Who is there?" asked a voice at the gate.

"Chairolas, Prince of Paida!" answered the traveller.

The gates opened instantly. "Princes are ever welcome at the city of Chrysaor," said the same voice.

And as Chairolas entered, he saw himself instantly surrounded by a group of both sexes richly attired, and bending to the earth with Eastern adoration, while, as with a single voice, they shouted out, "Welcome to the Prince of Paida!"

A few minutes more, and Chairolas was in the magnificent chamber of a magnificent house, seated before a board replete with the rarest viands and the choicest wines.

"All this is delightful," thought the prince, as he finished his supper; "but I see nothing of either fairies or fiends."

His soliloquy was interrupted by the master of the mansion, who came to conduct the prince to his couch. Scarcely was his head upon his pillow ere he fell asleep, — a sure sign that he was a stranger at Chrysaor, where the prevalent disease was the want of rest.

The next day, almost before Chairolas was dressed, his lodging was besieged by all the courtiers of the city. He found that, though his dialect was a little different from theirs, the language itself was much the same; for, perhaps, there is no court in the universe where a prince is not tolerably well understood. The servile adulation which Chairolas had experienced in Paida was not nearly so delight-

ful as the polished admiration he received from the courtiers of Chrysaor. While they preserved that tone of equality without which all society is but the interchange of ceremonies, they evinced, by a thousand nameless attentions, their respect for his good qualities, which they seemed to penetrate as by an instinct. The gaiety, the animation, the grace of those he saw, perfectly intoxicated the prince. He was immediately involved in a round of engagements. It was impossible that he should ever be alone.

CHAPTER V.

As the confusion of first impressions wore off, Chairolas remarked a singular peculiarity in the manners of his new friends. They were the greatest laughers he had ever met. Not that they laughed loudly, but that they laughed constantly. This habit was not attended with any real merriment or happiness. Many of the saddest persons laughed the most. It was also remarkable that the principal objects of these cachinnatory ebullitions were precisely such as Chairolas had been taught to consider the most serious, and the farthest removed from ludicrous associations. They never laughed at anything witty or humorous, at a comedy or a joke. But if one of their friends became poor, then how they laughed at his poverty! If a child broke the heart of a father, or a wife ran away from her husband, or a great lord cheated at play, or ruined his tradesmen, then they had no command over their muscles. In a word, misfortune or vice made a principal object of this epidemical affection. But not the only object; they laughed at anything that differed from their general habits. If a virgin blushed — if a sage talked wisdom — if a man did anything un-

common, no matter what, they were instantly seized with this jovial convulsion. They laughed at generosity — they laughed at sentiment — they laughed at patriotism — and, though affecting to be exceedingly pious, they laughed with particular pleasure at any extraordinary show of religion.

Chairolas was extremely puzzled; for he saw that, if they laughed at what was bad, they laughed also at what was good: it seemed as if they had no other mode of condemning or applauding. But what perplexed him yet more was a strange transformation to which this people were subject. Their faces were apt to turn, even in a single night, into enormous rhododendrons;* and it was very common to see a human figure walking about as gaily as possible with a flower upon its shoulders instead of a face.

Resolved to enlighten himself as to this peculiarity of custom, Chairolas one day took aside a courtier who appeared to him the most intelligent of his friends. Grinaldibus Hassan Sneeraskin (so was the courtier termed) laughed longer than ever when he heard the perplexity of the prince.

"Know," said he, as soon as he had composed

* It is to be presumed that Chrysaor was the original nursery of the rhododendron; though, in Fairyland, any flower is privileged to grow, without permission from the naturalist.

himself, "that there are two penal codes in this city. For one set of persons, whom you and I never see except in the streets, — persons who hew the wood and draw the water — persons who work for the other classes, — we have punishments, such as hanging, and flogging, and shutting up in prisons, and Heaven knows what; — punishments, in short, that are contained in the ninety-nine volumes of the Hatchet and Rope Pandects. But, for the other set, with whom you mix every day, — the very best society, in short, — we have another code, which punishes only by laughter. And you have no notion how severe the punishment is considered. It is thus that we keep our social system in order, and laugh folly and error out of countenance."

"An admirable — a most gentle code!" cried the prince. "But," he added, after a moment's reflection, "I see you sometimes laughing at that which to me seems entitled to reverence, while you show the most courteous respect to things which seem to me the fit objects of ridicule."

"Prince, you do not yet understand us: we never laugh at people who do exactly like the rest of us. We only laugh at singularity; because with us singularity is crime."

"Singularity — even in wisdom or virtue?"

"In wisdom or virtue? of course. Nothing so

singular as such singularity; therefore nothing so criminal?"

"But those persons with rhododendrons instead of faces?"

"Are the worst of our criminals. If we continue to laugh at persons for a certain time, and the laughter fail to correct their vicious propensities, their faces undergo the transformation you have witnessed, no matter how handsome they were before."

"This is indeed laughing people out of countenance," said Chairolas, amazed. "What an affliction!"

"Indeed it is. Take care," added Grinaldibus Hassan Sneeraskin, with paternal unction, — "take care that you never do anything to deserve a laugh — the torture is inexpressible — the transformation is awful!"

CHAPTER VI.

This conversation threw Chairolas into a profound reverie. The charm of the society was invaded; it now admitted restraint and fear. If ever he should be laughed at? if ever he should become a rhododendron? — terrible thought! He remembered various instances he had hitherto but little observed, in which he more than suspected that he had already been unconsciously afflicted with symptoms of this greatest of all calamities. His reason allowed the justice of his apprehension; for he could not flatter himself that in all respects he was exactly like the courtiers of Chrysaor.

That night he went to a splendid entertainment given by the prime minister. Conscious of great personal attractions, and magnificently attired, he felt, at his first entrance into the gorgeous halls, the flush of youthful and elated vanity. It was his custom to wear upon his breast one of his most splendid ornaments. It was the tuft of the fairy swan's down set in brilliants of great price. Something there was in this ornament which shed a kind of charm over his whole person. It gave a more interesting dignity to his mien, a loftier aspect to his

brow, a deeper and a softer expression to his eyes. So potent is the gift of a Good Genius, as all our science upon such subjects assures us.

Still, as Chairolas passed through the rooms, he perceived, with a thrill of terror, that a smile ill suppressed met him at every side; and when he turned his head to look back, he perceived that the fatal smile had expanded into a laugh. All his complacency vanished; terror and shame possessed him. Yes, he was certainly laughed at! He felt his face itching already — certainly the leaves were sprouting!

He hastened to escape from the crowded rooms — passed into the lighted and voluptuous gardens — and seated himself in a retired and sequestered alcove. Here he was surprised by the beautiful Mikra, a lady to whom he had been paying assiduous court, and who appeared to take a lively interest in his affairs.

"Prince Chairolas here!" cried the lady, seating herself by his side; "alone too, and sad! How is this?"

"Alas!" answered the prince, despondingly, "I feel that I am regarded as a criminal: how can I hope for your love! In a word — dreadful confession! — I am certainly laughed at. I shall assuredly blossom in a week or two. Light of my eyes! deign to compassionate my affliction, and instruct my ignor-

ance. Acquaint me with the crime I have committed."

"Prince," said the gentle Mikra, much moved by her lover's dejection, "do not speak thus. Perhaps I ought to have spared you this pain. But delicacy restrained me —"

"Speak! — speak in mercy!"

"Well then — but pardon me — that swan's down tuft, it is charming, beautiful, it becomes you exceedingly! But at Chrysaor nobody wears swan's down tufts, — you understand."

"And it is for this, then, that I may be rhododendronised!" exclaimed Chairolas.

"Indeed, I fear so."

"Away treacherous gift!" exclaimed the prince; and he tore off the fairy ornament. He dashed it to the ground, and left the alcove. The fair Mikra stayed behind to pick up the diamonds: the swan's down itself had vanished, or, at least, it was invisible to the fine lady of Chrysaor.

CHAPTER VII.

With the loss of his swan's down Prince Chairolas recovered his self-complacency. No one laughed at him in future. He was relieved from the fear of efflorescence. For a while he was happy. But months glided away, and the prince grew tired of his sojourn at Chrysaor. The sight of the same eternal faces and the same eternal rhododendrons, the sound of the same eternal laughter, wearied him to death. He resolved to pursue his travels. Accordingly, he quarrelled with Mikra, took leave of his friends, and, mounting his favourite steed, departed from the walls of Chrysaor. He took the precaution, this time, of hiring some attendants at Chrysaor, who carried with them provisions. A single one of the many jewels he bore about him would have more than sufficed to purchase the service of half Chrysaor.

Although he had derived so little advantage from one of the fairy gifts, he naturally thought he might be more fortunate with the rest. The pigeon's feather was appropriate enough to travelling (for we may suppose that it was a carrier-pigeon); accordingly he placed it, set in emeralds, amidst the plumage of his

cap. He spent some few days in rambling about, until he found he had entered a country unknown even to his guides. The landscape was more flat and less luxuriant than that which had hitherto cheered his way, the sun was less brilliant, and the sky seemed nearer to the earth.

While gazing around him, he became suddenly aware of the presence of a stranger, who, stationed right before his horse, stretched forth his hand and thus accosted him: —

"O thrice-noble and generous traveller! save me from starvation. Heaven smiles upon one to whom it has given the inestimable treasure of a pigeon's feather. May Heaven continue to lavish its blessings upon thee, — meanwhile spare me a trifle!"

The charitable Chairolas ordered his purse-bearer to relieve the wants of the stranger, and then inquired the name of the country they had entered. He was informed that it was termed Apatia; and that its inhabitants were singularly cordial to travellers, "Especially," added the mendicant, "if they possess that rarest of earthly gifts — the feather of a pigeon."

"Well," thought Chairolas, "my good genius evidently intends to make up for his mistake about the swan's down: doubtless the pigeon's feather will be exceedingly serviceable!"

He desired the mendicant to guide him to the nearest city of Apatia, which, fortunately, happened to be the metropolis.

On entering the streets, Chairolas was struck with the exceeding bustle and animation of the inhabitants; far from the indolent luxury of Chrysaor, everything breathed of activity, enterprise, and toil.

The place resembled a fortified town; the houses were built of ponderous stone, a drawbridge to each; the windows were barred with iron; a sentinel guarded every portico.

"Is there a foreign invasion without the walls?" asked the prince.

"No," answered the mendicant; "but here every man guards against his neighbour; take care of yourself, noble sir:" so saying, the grateful Apatian picked the prince's pockets of his loose coin (luckily it was not in his pockets that he kept his jewels), and disappeared amidst the crowd.

CHAPTER VIII.

The prince found himself no less courted in the capital of Apatia than he had been in Chrysaor. But society there was much less charming. He amused himself by going out in the streets incognito, and watching the manners of the inhabitants. He found them addicted to the most singular pursuits. One game consisted in setting up a straw and shooting arrows at it blindfold. If you missed the mark, you paid dearly; if you hit it, you made a fortune. Many persons ruined themselves at this game.

Another amusement consisted in giving certain persons, trained for the purpose, and dressed in long gowns, a quantity of gold, in return for which they threw dirt at you. The game was played thus: — You found one of these gownsmen — gave him the required quantity of gold — and then stood to be pelted at in a large tennis-court; your adversary did the same: if the gownsman employed against you dirtied you more than your gownsman dirtied your antagonist, you were stripped naked and turned adrift in the streets; but if your antagonist was the most bespattered, you won your game, and received back half the gold you had given to your gowns-

man. This was a most popular diversion. They had various other amusements, all of the same kind, in which the chief entertainment was the certainty of loss.

For the rest, the common occupation was quarrelling with each other, buying and selling, picking pockets, and making long speeches about liberty and glory!

Chairolas found that the pigeon's feather was everywhere a passport to favour. But in a short time this produced its annoyances. His room was besieged by applications for charity In vain he resisted. No man with a pigeon's feather, he was assured, ever refused assistance to the poor. All the ladies in the city were in love with him; all the courtiers were his friends; they adored and they plundered him; and the reason of the adoration and the plunder was the pigeon's feather.

One day he found his favourite friend with his favourite fair one — a fair one so favoured, that he had actually proposed and had actually been accepted. Their familiarity and their treachery were evident. Chairolas drew his sabre, and would certainly have slain them both, if the lady's screams had not brought the king's guards into the room. They took all three before the judge. He heard the case gravely, and sentenced Chairolas to forego the lady and pay the costs of the sentence.

"Base foreigner that you are!" he said, gravely,

"and unmindful of your honour. Have you not trusted your friend and believed in her you loved? Have you not suffered them to be often together? If you had been an honourable man, you would know that you must always watch a woman and suspect a friend. — Go!"

As Chairolas was retiring, half-choked with rage and shame, the lady seized him by the arm. "Ah!" she whispered, "I should never have deceived you but for the pigeon's feather."

Chairolas threw himself on his bed, and, exhausted by grief, fell fast asleep. When he woke the next morning, he found that his attendants had disappeared with the bulk of his jewels: they left behind them a scroll containing these words — "A man with so fine a pigeon's feather will never hang us for stealing."

Chairolas flung the feather out of the window. The wind blew it away in an instant. An hour afterwards he had mounted his steed and was already beyond the walls of the capital of Apatia.

CHAPTER IX.

At nightfall the prince found himself at the gates of a lofty castle. Wearied and worn out, he blew the horn suspended at the portals, and demanded food and shelter for the night. No voice answered, but the gates opened of their own accord. Chairolas left his courser to feed at will on the herbage, and entered the castle: he passed through several magnificent chambers without meeting a soul till he came to a small pavilion. The walls were curiously covered with violets and rose-leaves wrought in mosaic; the lights streamed from jewels of a ruby glow, set in lotos-leaves. The whole spot breathed of enchantment; in fact, Chairolas had at length reached an enchanted castle.

Upon a couch in an alcove reclined a female form, covered with a veil studded with silver stars, but of a texture sufficiently transparent to permit Chairolas to perceive how singularly beautiful were the proportions beneath. The prince approached with a soft step.

"Pardon me," he said, with a hesitating voice, "I fear that I disturb your repose." The figure made no reply; and after a pause, Chairolas, unable to resist the desire to see the face of the sleeper, lifted the veil.

Never had so beautiful a countenance broke even upon his dreams. The first bloom of youth shed its softest hues over the cheek; the lips just parted in a smile which sufficed to call forth a thousand dimples. The face only wanted for the completion of its charm that the eyes should open and light it up with soul; but the lids were closed in a slumber so profound, that, but for the colours of the cheek and the regular and ambrosial breathing of the lips, you might have imagined that the slumber was of death. Beside this fair creature lay a casket, on which the prince read these words engraved — "He only who can unlock this casket can awaken the sleeper; and he who finds the heart may claim the hand."

Chairolas, transported with joy and hope, seized the casket — the key was in the lock. With trembling hands he sought to turn it in the hasp — it remained immovable — it resisted his most strenuous efforts. Nothing could be more slight than the casket — more minute than the key; but all the strength of Chairolas was insufficient to open the lock.

Chairolas was in despair. He remained for days — for weeks — in the enchanted chamber. He neither ate nor slept during all that time. But such was the magic of the place that he never once felt hunger nor fatigue. Gazing upon that divine form, he for the first time experienced the rapture and intoxication of real love. He spent his days and nights in seeking to unclose the casket; sometimes in his

rage he dashed it to the ground — he trampled upon it — he sought to break what he could not open — in vain.

One day while thus employed, he heard the horn wind without the castle gates; then steps echoed along the halls, and presently a stranger entered the enchanted pavilion. The new-comer was neither old nor young, neither handsome nor ugly. He approached the alcove despite the menacing looks of the jealous prince. He gazed upon the sleeper; and, as he gazed, a low music breathed throughout the chamber. Surprised and awed, Chairolas let the casket fall from his hands. The intruder took it from the ground, read the inscription, and applied his hand to the key; — it turned not; — Chairolas laughed aloud; — the stranger sighed, and drew forth from his breast a little tuft of swan's down — he laid it upon the casket — again turned the key — the casket opened at once, and within lay a small golden heart. At that instant a voice broke from the heart. "Thou hast found the charm," it said; and, at the same time, the virgin woke, and, as she bent her eyes upon the last comer, she said, with unutterable tenderness, "It is of thee, then, that I have so long dreamed." The stranger fell at her feet. And Chairolas, unable to witness his rival's happiness, fled from the pavilion.

"Accursed that I am!" he groaned aloud. "If I had not cast away the fairy gift, *she* would have been mine!"

CHAPTER X.

For several days the unfortunate prince wandered through the woods and wastes, supporting himself on wild berries, and venting, in sighs and broken exclamations, his grief and rage. At length he came to the shores of a wide and glassy sea, — basking in the softest hues of an Oriental morn in the early summer. Its waves crisped over golden sands with a delicious and heavenly music; the air was scented with unspeakable fragrance, wafted from trees peculiar to the clime, and bearing at the same time the blossom and the fruit. At a slight distance from the shore was an island which seemed one garden — the fabled bowers of the Hesperides. Studded it was with ivory palaces, delicious fountains, and streams that wound amidst groves of asphodel and amaranth. And everywhere throughout the island wandered groups whose faces the prince could distinctly see, and those faces were made beautiful by peace unruffled and happiness unalloyed. Laughter — how different from that of Chrysaor! — was wafted to his ear, and the boughs of the trees, as they waved to the fragrant wind, gave forth melodies more exquisite than ever woke from the lutes of Lydia or the harps of Lesbos.

Wearied and exhausted the prince gazed upon the Happy Isle, and longed to be a partaker of its bliss, when, turning his eyes a little to the right, he saw, from a winding in the shore on which he stood, a vessel, with silken streamers, seemingly about to part for the opposite isle. Several persons of either sex were crowding into the vessel, and already waving their hands to the groups upon the island. Chairolas hastened to the spot. He pushed impatiently through the crowd; he was about to enter the vessel, when a venerable old man stopped and accosted him.

"Stranger, wouldst thou go to the Happy Isle?"

"Yes! Quick — quick, let me pass!"

"Stranger, whoever would enter the vessel must comply first with the conditions and pay the passage."

"I have some jewels left still," said Chairolas, haughtily. "I will pay the amount ten times over."

"We require neither jewels nor money," returned the old man, gravely. "What you must produce is the feather of a pigeon."

Chairolas shrunk back aghast. "But," said he, "I have no longer a pigeon's feather!"

The old man gazed at him with horror. The passengers set up a loud cry — "He has no pigeon's feather!" They pushed him back, the vessel parted, and Chairolas was left upon the strand.

CHAPTER XI.

Cursing his visits to Chrysaor and Apatia, which had cost him so dear and given him so little in return, Chairolas tore himself from the sea-shore and renewed his travels.

Towards the noon of the following day he entered a valley covered with immense sunflowers and poppies. Anything so gaudy he had never before beheld. Here and there were rocks, evidently not made by nature; — mounds raised by collections of various rubbish, ornamented with artificial ruins and temples. Sometimes he passed through grottoes formed by bits of coloured glass and shells, intended to imitate spars and even jewels. The only birds that inhabited the boughs were parrots and mock-birds. They made a most discordant din; but they meant it for imitations of nightingales and larks. The flare of the poppies and the noise of the birds were at first intolerable, but by degrees the wanderer became used to them, and at length found them charming.

"How delightful this is!" said he, flinging himself under a yew-tree, which was trimmed into the shape of a pagoda. "So cheerful — so gay! After

all, I am as well off here as I could have been in the Happy Isle. Nay, I think there is a greater air of comfort in the sight of these warm sunflowers than in those eternal amaranths; and certainly, the music of the parrots is exceedingly lively!"

While thus soliloquising the prince saw an old baboon walk leisurely up to him. The creature supported itself upon a golden-headed staff. It wore a long wig and a three-cornered hat. It had a large star of coloured glass on its breast; and an apron of sky-blue round its middle.

As the baboon approached, Chairolas was much struck by its countenance; the features were singularly intelligent and astute, and seemed even more so from a large pair of spectacles, which gave the animal a learned look about the eyes.

"Prince!" said the baboon, "I am well acquainted with your adventures, and I think I can be of service to you in your present circumstances."

"Can you give me the lady I saw in the enchanted castle?"

"No!" answered the baboon. "But a man who has seen so much of the world knows that after a little time one lady is not better than another."

"Can you then admit me to the Happy Isle?"

"No! but you said rightly just now that you were as well off in this agreeable valley."

"Can you give me back my tuft of swan's down and my pigeon's feather?"

"No! but I can imitate them so exactly that the imitations will be equally useful. Meanwhile, come and dine with me."

Chairolas followed the baboon into a cave, where he was sumptuously served by pea-green monkeys to dishes of barbecued squirrels.

After dinner the baboon and the prince renewed their conversation. From his host, Chairolas learned that the regions called "the unknown" by the people of Paida were of unlimited extent, inhabited by various nations: that no two of his predecessors had ever met with the same adventures, though most of them had visited both Chrysaor and Apatia. The baboon declared he had been of use to them all. He was, indeed, an animal of exceeding age and experience, and had a perfect recollection of the cities before the deluge.

He made, out of the silky hair of a white fox, a most excellent imitation of the lost tuft of swan's down; and from the breast of a vulture he plucked a feather which any one at a distance might mistake for a pigeon's.

Chairolas received them with delight.

"And now, prince," said the baboon, "observe, that, while you may show these as openly as you please, it will be prudent to conceal the eagle's feather that you have yet left. No inconvenience results from parading the false, — much danger from exhibiting the true. Take this little box of adamant,

lock up the eagle's feather in it, and, whenever you meditate any scheme or exploit, open it and consult the feather. In future you will find that it has a voice, and can answer when you speak to it."

Chairolas stayed some days in the baboon's valley, and then once more renewed his travels. What was his surprise to find himself, on the second day of his excursion, in the same defile as that which had conducted him from his paternal realms! He computed, for the first time, the months he had spent in his wanderings, and found that the three years were just accomplished. In less than an hour the prince was at the mouth of the defile, where a numerous cavalcade had been for some days assembled to welcome his return, and conduct him home.

CHAPTER XII.

THE young prince was welcomed in Paida with the greatest enthusiasm. Every one found him prodigiously improved. He appeared in public with the false swan's down and the false pigeon's feather. They became him even better than the true ones, and indeed he had taken care to have them set in much more magnificent jewels. But the prince was a prey to one violent and master passion — Ambition. This had always been a part of his character; but previous to his travels it had been guided by generous and patriotic impulses. It was so no longer. He spent whole days in conversing with the eagle's feather, though the feather indeed never said but one word, which was — "WAR."

At that time a neighbouring people had chosen five persons instead of two to inspect the treasury accounts. Chairolas affected to be horror-struck with the innovation. He declared it boded no good to Paida; he declaimed against it night and day. At last, he so inflamed the people, that, despite the reluctance of the king, war was declared. An old general of great renown headed the army. Chairolas was appointed second in command. They had

scarcely reached the confines of the enemy's country when Chairolas became no less unhappy than before. "Second in command! why not first?" He consulted his demon feather. It said "FIRST." It spoke no other word. The old general was slow in his movements; he pretended that it was unwise to risk a battle at so great a distance from the capital; but in reality, he hoped that the appearance of his army would awe the enemy into replacing the two treasurers, and so secure the object of the war without bloodshed. Chairolas penetrated this design, so contrary to his projects. He wrote home to his father, to accuse the general of taking bribes from the enemy. The old king readily believed one whom a good Genius had so richly endowed. The general was recalled and beheaded. Chairolas succeeded to the command. He hastened to march to the capital, which he took and pillaged; but, instead of replacing the two treasurers, he appointed one chief — himself; and twenty subordinate treasurers — his officers.

Never was prince so popular as Chairolas on his return from his victories. He was intoxicated by the sweetness of power and the desire of yet greater glory. He longed to reign himself — he sighed to think his father was so healthy. He shut himself up in his room and talked to his feather: its word now was "KING." Shortly afterwards Chairolas (who was the idol of the soldiers) seized the palace,

issued a proclamation that his father was in his dotage, and had abdicated the throne in his favour. The king was removed to a distant wing of the palace, and a day or two afterwards found dead in his bed. Chairolas commanded the Court to wear mourning for three months, and everybody compassionated his grief.

From that time Chairolas, now the monarch of Paida, gave himself up to his ruling passion. He extended his fame from east to west — he was called the Great Chairolas. But his subjects became tired of war; their lands were ravaged — their treasury exhausted — new taxes were raised for new conquests, — and at length Chairolas was no longer called the "Great," but the "Tyrant."

CHAPTER XIII.

As Chairolas advanced in years, he left off wearing the false swan's down and the false pigeon's feather. He had long ceased to lock up his eagle-plume; he carried it constantly in his helmet, that it might whisper with ease into his ear. He had ceased to be popular with any class the moment he abandoned the presents of the baboon. By degrees a report spread through the nation that the king was befriended by an evil spirit, and that the eagle's plume was a talisman which secured to the possessor — while it rendered him grasping, cruel, and avaricious — prosperity, power, and fame. A conspiracy was formed to rob the king of his life and talisman at once. At the head of the conspiracy was the king's heir, Belmanes. They took their measures so well, that they succeeded in seizing the palace. They penetrated into the chamber of the Great Chairolas, — they paused at the threshold on hearing his voice, — he was addressing the fatal talisman.

"The ordeal," he said, "through which I passed robbed me of thy companions; but no ordeal could rob me of thee. I rule my people with a rod of iron; I have spread my conquests to the farthest regions to which the banner of Paida was ever wafted. I am still dissatisfied — what more can I desire?"

"Death!" cried the conspirators; and the king

fell pierced to the heart. Belmanes seized the eagle's plume: it crumbled into dust in his grasp.

After the death of Chairolas, the following sentences were written in gold letters before the gates of the great academy of Paida by a priest who pretended to be inspired: —

"The ridicule of common men aspires to be the leveller of genius."

"To renounce a virtue, because it has made thee suffer from fraud, is to play the robber to thyself."

"Wouldst thou imitate the properties of the swan and the pigeon, borrow from the fox and the vulture. But no man can wear the imitations all his life: when he abandons them, he is undone."

"If thou hast three virtues, and losest two, the third, by itself, may become a vice. There is no blessing to the world like AMBITION joined to SYMPATHY and BENEVOLENCE; no scourge to the world like Ambition divorced from them."

"The choicest gifts of the most benevolent genii are impotent, unless accompanied by a charm against experience."

"The charm against experience is woven by two spirits — Patience and Self-esteem."

On these sentences nine sects of philosophy were founded. Each construed them differently; each produced ten thousand volumes in support of its interpretation; and no man was ever made better or wiser by the sentences, the sects, and the volumes.

ON INFIDELITY IN LOVE.

To the vulgar there is but one infidelity — that which, in woman at least, can never be expiated nor forgiven. They know not the thousand shades in which change disguises itself — they trace not the fearful progress of the alienation of the heart. But to those who truly and deeply love, there is an infidelity with which the person has no share. Like ingratitude, it is punished by no laws. We are powerless to avenge ourselves.

When two persons are united by affection, and the love of the one survives that of the other, who can measure the anguish of the unfortunate who watches the extinction of a light which nothing can reillumine! It mostly happens, too, that the first discovery is sudden. There is a deep trustfulness in a loving heart; it is blind to the gradual decrease of sympathy — its divine charity attributes the absent eye, the chilling word, to a thousand causes, save the true one; care — illness — some worldly trouble — some engrossing thought; and (poor fool

that it is!) endeavours by additional tenderness to compensate for the pain that is not of its own causing. Alas, the time has come when it can no longer compensate! It hath ceased to be the all-in-all to its cruel partner. Custom has bred contempt — and indifference gathers round the place in which we had garnered up our soul. At length the appalling light breaks upon us. We discover we are no longer loved. And what remedy have we? None! Our first, our natural feeling is resentment. We are conscious of treachery; this ungrateful heart that has fallen from us, how have we prized and treasured it — how have we sought to shield it from every arrow — how have we pleased ourselves, in solitude and in absence, with yearning thoughts of its faith and beauty! — now it is ours no more! Then we break into wild reproaches — we become exacting — we watch every look — we gauge every action — we are unfortunate — we weary — we offend. These our agonies — our impetuous bursts of passion — our ironical and bitter taunts, to which we half expect, as heretofore, to hear the soft word that turneth away wrath — these only expedite the fatal hour; they are new crimes in us; the very proofs of our bitter love are treasured and repeated as reasons why we should be loved no more: — as if without a throe, without a murmur, we could resign ourselves to so great a loss. Sometimes we stand in silence, and with a full heart, gazing upon

those hard cold eyes which never again can lavish tenderness upon us. And our silence is dumb — its eloquence is gone. We are no longer understood. We long to die in order to be avenged. We half pray for some great misfortune, some agonising illness, that it may bring back to us our soother and our nurse. We say, "In affliction or in sickness the old affection will repent its desertion and return." We are mistaken. We are shelterless — the roof has been taken from our heads — we are exposed to any and every storm. Then comes a sharp and dread sentiment of loneliness and insecurity. We are left — weak children — in the dark. We are bereft more irrevocably than by death; for will even the Hereafter, that unites the happy dead who die lovingly, restore the love that has perished ere life be dim?

What shall we do? We have accustomed ourselves to love and to be loved. Can we turn to new ties, and seek in another that which is extinct in one? How often is such a resource in vain! Have we not given to this — the treacherous and the false friend — the best years of our life — the youth of our hearts — the flower of our affections? Did we not yield up the harvest? — how little is there left for another to glean! This makes the crime of the moral infidelity. The one who takes away from us his or her love, makes us despond of the love of others. We have no longer, perhaps, the youth and

the attractions to engage affection. Once we might have chosen out of the world — now the time is past. Who shall love us in our sear and yellow leaf, as we might have been loved in the season of our bloom? "Give me, then, back," said the wife whom her lord proposed to put away, "Give me, then, back that which I brought to you." And the man answered, in his vulgar coarseness of soul, "Your fortune shall return to you." "I thought not of fortune," said the wife; "give me back my real wealth — give me back my beauty and my youth — give me back the virginity of soul — give me back the cheerful mind, and the heart that had never been disappointed."

Yes; it is of these that the unfaithful rob us, when they cast us back upon the world, and tell us with a bitter mockery to form new ties. In proportion to the time that we have been faithful — in proportion to the feelings we have sacrificed — in proportion to the wealth of soul — of affection, of devotion, that we have consumed — are we shut out from the possibility of atonement elsewhere. But this is not all — the other occupations of the world are suddenly made stale and barren to us! the daily avocations of life — the common pleasures — the social diversions so tame in themselves, had their charm when we could share, and talk over, them with another. It was sympathy which made them sweet — the sympathy withdrawn they are

nothing to us — worse than nothing. The talk has become the tinkling cymbal, and society the gallery of pictures. Ambition, toil, the great aims of life — even these abruptly cease to excite. What, in the first place, made labour grateful and smoothed the sharp pathways of ambition? Was it not the hope that their rewards would be reflected upon another self? Now there is no other self! And, in the second place, does it not require a certain calmness and freedom of mind for great efforts? Persuaded of the possession of what most we value, we can look abroad with cheerfulness and hope; — the consciousness of a treasure inexhaustible by external failures, makes us speculative and bold. Now, all things are coloured by our despondency; our self-esteem — that necessary incentive to glory — is humbled and abased. Our pride has received a jarring and bitter shock. We no longer feel that we are equal to stern exertion. We wonder at what we have dared before. And therefore it is, that, when Othello believes himself betrayed, the occupations of his whole life suddenly become burthensome and abhorred.

"Farewell," he saith,

"Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!"

And then, as the necessary but unconscious link in the chain of thought, he continues at once —

"Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! oh, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
Farewell! — Othello's occupation's gone."

But there is another and a more permanent result from this bitter treason. Our trustfulness in human nature is diminished. We are no longer the credulous enthusiasts of good. The pillars of the moral world seem shaken. We believe, we hope, no more from the faith of others. If the one whom we so worshipped, and so served — who knew us in our best years — to whom we have rendered countless, daily offerings — whom we put in our heart of hearts — against whom if a world hinted, we had braved a world — if *this one* has deserted us, *who* then shall be faithful?

At length we begin to reconcile ourselves to the worst; gradually we gather the moss of our feelings from this heart which has become to us as stone. Our pride hardens down into indifference. Ceasing to be loved, we cease to love. Seasons may roll away, all other feelings ebb and flow. Ambition may change into apathy — generosity into avarice — we may forget the enmities of years — we may make friends of foes; but the love we have lost is never renewed. On that dread vacuum of the breast

the temple and the garden rise no more: — that feeling, be it hatred, be it scorn, be it indifference, which replaces love, endures to the last. And, altered for ever to the one — how many of us are altered for ever to the world; — neither so cheerful, nor so kind, nor so active in good, nor so incredulous of evil as we were before! The deluge of Passion has rolled back — the earth is green again. But we are in a new world. And the new world is the sepulchre of the old.

FI-HO-TI;

OR,

THE PLEASURES OF REPUTATION.

A CHINESE TALE.

Fi-ho-ti was considered a young man of talents; he led a pleasant life in Pekin. In the prime of youth, of a highly respectable family, and enjoying a most agreeable competence, he was exceedingly popular among the gentlemen whom he entertained at his board, and the ladies who thought he might propose. Although the Chinese are not generally sociable, Fi-ho-ti had ventured to set the fashion of giving entertainments, in which ceremony was banished for mirth. All the pleasures of life were at his command, and he enjoyed them too thoroughly ever to hazard the loss of them by excess. No man in Pekin when waking was so energetically awake, when sleeping so tranquilly asleep.

In an evil hour it happened that Fi-ho-ti discovered that he possessed genius. A philosopher, — who, being also his uncle, had the double right of

philosophy and relationship, to say everything unpleasant to him, — took it into his head to be very indignant at the happy life which Fi-ho-ti so peacefully enjoyed.

Accordingly, one beautiful morning he visited our young Chin-Epicurean. He found him in his summer-house, stretched on luxurious cushions, quaffing tea the most delicious in cups of porcelain the most exquisite, reading a Chinese novel, and enlivening the study, from time to time, by a light conversation with a young lady who had come to visit him.

Our philosopher was naturally shocked at so pleasant a view of human life, for, though it is the obvious duty of Philosophy to reconcile us to the pains of existence, she is very indignant if we console ourselves with its pleasures.

Our sage was a man very much disliked and very much respected. Fi-ho-ti rose from his cushions, a little ashamed of being detected in so agreeable an indolence, and reminded for the first time of the maxims of Chinese morality, which hold it highly improper for a gentleman to be seen with a lady. The novel fell from his hand; and the young lady, frightened at the long beard and the long nails of the philosopher, would have run away if her feet would have allowed her: as it was, she summoned her attendants, and hastened to complain to her friends of the manner in which the pleasantest *têtes-à-têtes*

can be spoilt, when young men are so unfortunate as to have philosophers for uncles.

The mandarin, — for Fi-ho-ti's visitor enjoyed no less a dignity, and was entitled to wear a blue globe in his cap,* — seeing the coast clear, hemmed three times, and thus commenced his avuncular admonitions.

"Are you not ashamed, young man, of the life that you lead? — are you not ashamed to be so indolent and so happy? You possess talents; you are in the prime of youth, you have already attained the rank of Keu-jin;** — are you deaf to the noble voice of ambition? Your country calls upon you for exertion, — seek to distinguish your name, — recollect the example of Confucius, — give yourself up to study, — be wise and be great."

Much more to this effect spoke the mandarin, for he loved to hear himself talk; and, like all men privileged to give advice, he fancied that he was wonderfully eloquent. In this instance his vanity did not deceive him; for it was the vanity of another that he addressed. Fi-ho-ti was moved; he felt he had been very foolish to be happy so long. Visions of disquietude and fame floated before him: he listened

* The distinction of mandarins of the third and fourth order.

** A collegiate grade, which renders those who attain it eligible to offices of state.

with attention to the exhortations of the philosopher; he resolved to distinguish himself, and to be wise.

The mandarin was charmed with the success of his visit; it was a great triumph to disturb so much enjoyment. He went home, and commenced a tract upon the progressive advance of philosophy.

Every one knows that in China learning alone is the passport to the offices of state: what rank and fortune are in other countries, learning is in the Celestial Empire. Fi-ho-ti surrendered himself to Knowledge. He retired to a solitary cavern, near upon Kai-fon-gu; he filled his retreat with books and instruments of science; he renounced all social intercourse; the herbs of the plain and the water of the spring sufficed the tastes hitherto accustomed to the most delicious viands of Pekin. Forgetful of love and of pleasure, he consigned three of the fairest years of his existence to uninterrupted labour. He instructed himself — he imagined he was capable of instructing others.

Fired with increasing ambition, our student returned to Pekin. He composed a work, which, though light and witty enough to charm the gay, was the origin of a new school of philosophy. It was at once bold and polished; and the oldest mandarin or the youngest beauty of Pekin could equally appreciate and enjoy it. In one word, Fi-ho-ti's book became the rage, Fi-ho-ti was *the* author of his day.

Delighted by the novelty of literary applause, our young student more than ever resigned himself to literary pursuits. He wrote again, and again succeeded; — all the world declared that Fi-ho-ti had established his reputation, and he obtained the dazzling distinction of Bin-sze.

Was Fi-ho-ti the happier for his reputation? You shall judge.

He went to call upon his uncle. The philosopher received him with a frigid embarrassment. He talked of the weather and the emperor, — the last pagoda and the new fashion in teacups: he said not a word about his nephew's books. Fi-ho-ti was piqued; he introduced the subject of his own accord.

"Ah!" said the philosopher, drily, "I understand you have written something that pleases the women; no doubt you will grow solid as your judgment increases. But, to return to the teacups —"

Fi-ho-ti was chagrined: he had lost the affection of his learned uncle for ever; for he was now considered to be more learned than his uncle himself. It is one of the earliest mortifications which await the man who achieves success, to find his most cynical disparagers in those whom his youth was trained to admire, as if it were reasonable to expect that they to whom you have looked up would cheerfully consent to look up to you. "Alas!" thought Fi-ho-ti, as he re-entered his palanquin, "the uncle I so revere loves me no longer. This is a misfortune —"

— A misfortune, perhaps, but it was the effect of REPUTATION.

The heart of Fi-ho-ti was naturally kind and genial; though the thirst of pleasure was cooled in his veins, he still cherished the social desires of friendship. He summoned once more around him the comrades of his youth; he fancied they, at least, would be delighted to find their friend not unworthy of their affection. He received them with open arms; — they returned his greeting with shyness, and an awkward affectation of sympathy; — their conversation no longer flowed freely — they were afraid of committing themselves before so clever a man; — they felt they were no longer with an equal, and yet they refused to acknowledge a superior. Fi-ho-ti perceived, with indescribable grief, that a wall had grown up between himself and the companions of past years; their pursuits, their feelings, were no longer the same. They were not proud of his success — they were jealous; the friends of his youth were the critics of his manhood.

"This, too, is a misfortune," thought Fi-ho-ti, as he threw himself at night upon his couch. Very likely: — it was the effect of REPUTATION!

"But if the old friends are no more, I will gain new," thought the student. "Men of the same pursuits will have the same sympathies. I aspire to be a sage: I will court the friendship of sages."

This was a notable idea of Fi-ho-ti's. He sur-

rounded himself with the authors, the wits, and the wise men of Pekin. They ate his dinners, — they made him read their manuscripts — (and a bad handwriting in Chinese is no trifle!) — they told him he was a wonderful genius, — and they abused him anonymously every week in the Pekin journals; for China, by the way, is perhaps the only despotism in the world in which the press is entirely free. The heart of Fi-ho-ti yearned after friendship — friendship was a plant little cultivated by the literati of China; they were all too much engrossed with themselves to dream of affection for another. They had no talk — no thought — no feeling — except that which expressed love for their own books, and hatred for the books of their contemporaries.

One day Fi-ho-ti had the misfortune to break his leg. The most intimate of his acquaintance among the literati found him stretched on his couch, having just undergone the operation of setting.

"Ah!" said the author, "how very unlucky — how very unfortunate!"

"You are extremely obliging," said Fi-ho-ti, touched by his visitor's evident emotion.

"Yes, it is particularly unlucky that your accident should occur just at this moment: for I wanted to consult you about this passage in my new book before it is published to-morrow!"

The broken leg of his friend seemed to the author

only as an interruption to the pleasure of reading his own works.

But, above all, Fi-ho-ti found it impossible to trust men who gave the worst possible character of each other. If you believed the literati themselves, so envious, malignant, worthless, unprincipled a set of men as the literati of Pekin never had been created! Every new acquaintance he made told him an anecdote of an old acquaintance which made his hair stand on end. Fi-ho-ti began to be alarmed. He contracted more and more the circle of his society; and resolved to renounce the notion of friendship among men of similar pursuits.

Even in the remotest provinces of the Celestial Empire the writings of Fi-ho-ti were greatly approved. The gentlemen quoted him at their tea, and the ladies wondered whether he was good-looking; but this applause — this interest that he inspired — never reached the ears of Fi-ho-ti. He beheld not the smiles he called forth by his wit, nor the tears he excited by his pathos: — all that he saw of the effects of his reputation was in the abuse he received in the Pekin journals; he there read, every week and every month, that he was a creature to be, in all ways, despised. One journal declared that he was stupid, a second that he was wicked, a third that he was hump-backed, and a fourth, more malignant than the rest, that he was poor. Other journals, indeed, did not so much abuse as misre-

present him. He found his doctrines twisted into all manner of shapes. He could not defend them — for it is not dignified to reply to all the Pekin journals; but he was assured by his flatterers that truth would ultimately prevail, and posterity do him justice. "Alas!" thought Fi-ho-ti, "am I to be deemed a culprit all my life, in order that I may be acquitted after death? Is there no justice for me until I am past the power of malice? Surely this is a misfortune!" Very likely: — it was the necessary consequence of REPUTATION!

Fi-ho-ti now began to perceive that the desire of fame was a chimæra. He was yet credulous enough to follow another chimæra, equally fallacious. He said to himself — "It was poor and vain in me to desire to shine. Let me raise my heart to a more noble ambition; — let me desire only to instruct."

Fraught with this lofty notion, Fi-ho-ti now conceived a more solid and a graver habit of mind: he became rigidly conscientious in the composition of his works. He no longer desired to write what was brilliant, but to discover what was true. He erased, without mercy, the most lively images — the most sparkling aphorisms—if even a doubt of their moral utility crossed his mind. He wasted two additional years of the short summer of youth: he gave the fruits of his labour to the world in a book of the most elaborate research, the only object of which was to enlighten his countrymen. "This, at least,

they cannot abuse," thought he, when he finished the last line. Ah! how much was he mistaken!

Doubtless, in other countries the public are remarkably grateful to any author for correcting their prejudices and combating their foibles; but in China, attack one orthodox error, prove to the people that you wish to elevate and improve them, and renounce all happiness, all tranquillity, for the rest of your life!

Fi-ho-ti's book was received with the most frigid neglect by the philosophers, — Firstly, because the Pekin philosophers are visionaries, and it did not build a system upon visions, — and secondly, because of Fi-ho-ti himself they were exceedingly jealous. But from his old friends, the journalists of Pekin — O Fo! — with what invective, what calumny, what abuse it was honoured! He had sought to be the friend of his race, — he was stigmatised as the direst of its enemies. He was accused of all manner of secret designs; the painted slippers of the mandarins were in danger; and he had evidently intended to muffle all the bells of the grand Pagoda! Alas! let no man wish to be a saint unless he is prepared to be a martyr.

"Is this injustice?" cried Fi-ho-ti to his flatterers. "No," said they, with one voice; "No, Fi-ho-ti, — it is REPUTATION!"

Thoroughly disgusted with his ambition, Fi-ho-ti now resolved to resign himself once more to plea-

sure. Again he heard music, and again he feasted and made love. In vain! — the zest, the appetite was gone. The sterner pursuits he had cultivated of late years had rendered his mind incapable of appreciating the luxuries of frivolity. He had opened a gulf between himself and his youth; — his heart could be young no more.

"One faithful breast shall console me for all," thought he. "Yang-y-se is beautiful and smiles upon me; I will woo and win her."

Fi-ho-ti surrendered his whole soul to the new passion he had conceived. Yang-y-se listened to him favourably. He could not complain of cruelty: he fancied himself beloved. With the ardour which belonged to his early character, he devoted alike his genius and his fortune to this amiable being; pleased to think that by the one he could celebrate her charms, and by the other forestall her caprices. For some weeks he enjoyed a dream of delight: he woke from it too soon. A rival beauty was willing to attach to herself the wealthy and generous Fi-ho-ti. "Why," said she, one day, "why do you throw yourself away upon Yang-y-se? Do you fancy she loves you? You are mistaken: she has no heart; it is only her vanity that makes her willing to admit you as her slave." Fi-ho-ti was incredulous and indignant. "Read this letter," said the rival beauty. "Yang-y-se wrote it to me but the other day."

Fi-ho-ti read as follows: —

"We had a charming supper with the gay author last night, and wished much for you. You need not rally me on my affection for him; I do not love him, but I am pleased to command his attentions: in a word, my vanity is flattered with the notion of chaining to myself one of the most distinguished persons in Pekin. But love — ah! *that* is quite another thing."

Fi-ho-ti's eyes were now thoroughly opened. He recalled a thousand little instances which had proved that Yang-y-se had been only in love with his celebrity.

He saw at once the great curse of distinction. Be renowned, and resign the hope to be loved for yourself! As you are hated not for your faults but your success, so are you loved not for your merits but their fame. A man who has reputation is like a tower whose height is estimated by the length of its shadow. The sensitive and high-wrought mind of Fi-ho-ti now gave way to a gloomy despondency. Being himself misinterpreted, calumniated, and traduced; and feeling that none loved him but through vanity, that he stood alone with his enemies in the world, he became the prey to misanthropy, and gnawed by perpetual suspicion. He distrusted the smiles of others. The faces of men seemed to him as masks; he felt everywhere the presence of deceit. Yet these feelings had made no part of his early character, which was naturally frank, joyous, and

confiding. Was the change a misfortune? Possibly; but it was the effect of REPUTATION!

About this time, too, Fi-ho-ti began to feel the effects of the severe study he had undergone. His health gave way; his nerves were shattered; he was in that terrible revolution in which the Mind — that vindictive labourer — wreaks its ire upon the enfeebled taskmaster, the Body. He walked the ghost of his former self.

One day he was standing pensively beside one of the streams that intersect the gardens of Pekin, and, gazing upon the waters, he muttered his bitter reveries. "Ah!" thought he, "why was I ever discontented with happiness? I was young, rich, cheerful; and life to me was a perpetual holiday: my friends caressed me, my mistress loved me for myself. No one hated, or maligned, or envied me. Like yon leaf upon the water, my soul danced merrily over the billows of existence. But courage, my heart! I have at least done some good; benevolence must experience gratitude — young Psi-ching, for instance! I have the pleasure of thinking that *he* must love me; I have made his fortune; I have brought him from obscurity into repute: for it has been my character as yet never to be jealous of others!"

Psi-ching was a young poet, who had been secretary to Fi-ho-ti. The student had discovered genius and insatiable ambition in the young man; he had

directed and advised his pursuits; he had raised him into fortune and notice; he had enabled him to marry the mistress he loved. Psi-ching vowed to him everlasting gratitude.

While Fi-ho-ti was thus consoling himself with the idea of Psi-ching's affection, it so happened that Psi-ching, and one of the philosophers of the day whom the public voice esteemed second to Fi-ho-ti, passed along the banks of the river. A tree hid Fi-ho-ti from their sight; they were earnestly conversing, and Fi-ho-ti heard his own name more than once repeated.

"Yes," said Psi-ching, "poor Fi-ho-ti cannot live much longer; his health is broken; you will lose a formidable rival when he is dead."

The philosopher smiled. "Why, it will certainly be a stone out of my way. You are constantly with him, I think?"

"I am. He is a charming person; but the real fact is, that, seeing he cannot live much longer, I am keeping a journal of his last days: in a word, I shall write the history of my distinguished friend. I think it will take much, and have a prodigious sale."

The talkers passed on.

Fi-ho-ti did not die so soon as was expected, and Psi-ching never published the journal from which he anticipated so much profit. But Fi-ho-ti ceased to be remarkable for the kindness of his heart and the

philanthropy of his views. He was rather known for the sourness of his temper and the bitterness of his satire.

By degrees he rose to an eminence which, despite his detractors, the public acknowledged sufficiently to ensure the honours that the sovereigns of China are accustomed to bestow upon superior intellect and learning. On the accession of a new emperor, Fi-ho-ti was commanded to ask any favour that he desired. The office of Tsung-tuh (or viceroy) of the rich province of Che-kiang was just vacant. The courtiers waited breathless to hear in what well-chosen delicacies of expression so acknowledged a master of language would combine a confession of his demerits with a request for the dignified office which his merits entitled him to claim. The emperor smiled benignly — the Viceroyalty of Che-kiang was the post he secretly intended for Fi-ho-ti. "Son of heaven, and lord of a myriad of years," said the favourite, "suffer then thy servant to retire into one of the monasteries of Kai-fon-gu, and — to change his name!"

The last hope of peace that was left to Fi-ho-ti was to escape from — his REPUTATION.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD IN MEN AND BOOKS.

Royalty and its symbols were abolished in France. A showman of wild beasts possessed an immense Bengal tiger (the pride of his collection), commonly called the *Royal Tiger*. What did our showman do? — Why, he knew the world, and he changed the name of the beast from the *Tigre* Royal to the *Tigre* National! Horace Walpole was particularly charmed with this anecdote, for he knew the world as well as the showman did. It is exactly these little things — the happy turn of a phrase — a well-timed pleasantry (which no unobservant man ever thinks of), that, while seeming humour, are in reality wisdom. There are changes in the vein of wit as in everything else. Sir William Temple tells us that on the return of Charles II. none were more out of fashion than the old Earl of Norwich, who was esteemed the greatest wit of the time of Charles I. But it is clear that the Earl of Norwich must have wanted knowledge of the world; he did not feel, as by an instinct, like the showman, how to

vary an epithet — he stuck to the last to his *tigre royal!*

This knowledge of the world baffles our calculations — it does not always require experience. Some men take to it intuitively; their first step in life exhibits the same profound mastery over the minds of their contemporaries — the same subtle consideration — the same felicitous address, that distinguish the close of their career. Congreve had written his comedies at twenty-five; and Farquhar, the Fielding of the Drama, died young. In any numerous family you will find some one child who construes the characters of the household and knows how they should be dealt with better than the grown-up people do.

Minds early accustomed to solitude usually make the keenest observers of the world, and chiefly for this reason — when few objects are presented to our contemplation, we seize them — we ruminate over them — we think, again and again, upon all the features they present to our examination; and we thus master the knowledge of mankind, as Eugene Aram mastered that of book-learning — by studying five lines at a time, and ceasing not from our labour till those are thoroughly acquired. A boy, whose attention has not been distracted by a multiplicity of objects — who, living greatly alone, is obliged therefore to think, not as a task, but as a diversion, emerges at last into the world — a shy

man, but a deep observer. Accustomed to reflection, he is not dazzled by novelty; while it strikes his eye, it occupies his mind. Hence, if he sit down to describe what he sees, he describes it justly at once, and at first; and more vividly, perhaps, than he might in after-life, because it is newer to him. Perhaps, too, the moral eye resembles the physical — by custom familiarises itself with delusion, and inverts mechanically the objects presented to it, till the deceit becomes more natural than nature itself.

There are men who say they know the world, because they know its vices. Could we admit this claim, what sage would rival an officer at Bow Street, or the turnkey at Newgate? Theirs would indeed be knowledge of the world, if the world were inhabited only by rogues. But pretenders of this sort are as bad judges of our minds as a physician would be of our bodies if he had never seen any but those in a diseased state. Such a man would fancy health itself a disease! We generally find, indeed, that men are governed by their *weaknesses*, not their *vices*, and those weaknesses are often the most amiable part about them. The wavering Jaffier betrays his friend through a weakness. He was too weak as man to defend his honour from the cajoleries of a woman. A similar weakness has caused many a crime worse than Jaffier's. Yet, if the character of such a criminal be fairly dissected, the only point in that character

which could induce a respectable jury to recommend the criminal to mercy would be the weakness which caused the crime. It is the knowledge of these weaknesses that serves a man better in the understanding and conquest of his species, than a knowledge of the vices to which they lead — it is better to seize the one cause than ponder over the thousand effects. It is the former knowledge which I chiefly call the knowledge of the world. It is this which immortalised Molière in the drama, and distinguishes Talleyrand in action.

It has been asked whether the same worldly wisdom which we admire in a writer would have made him equally successful in action, had occasion brought him prominently forward? Certainly not as a necessary consequence. Swift was the most sensible writer of his day, and one of the least sensible politicians, in the selfish sense — the only sense in which he knew it — of the word. How is this difference between the man and the writer to be accounted for? Because, in the writer, the infirmities of constitution are either concealed or decorated by genius: not so in the man; fretfulness, spleen, morbid sensitiveness, eternally spoil our plans in life, but they often give an interest to our plans on paper. To show wisdom in a book, it is but necessary that we should possess the theoretical wisdom; while in life it requires not only the theoretical wisdom, but the practical ability to act up to it.

We may know exactly what we ought to do, but we may not have the fortitude to do it. "Now," says the shy man in love, "I ought to go and talk to my mistress — my rival is with her — I ought to make myself as agreeable as possible — I ought to throw that fellow into the shade by my *bons mots* and my compliments." Does he do so? No! he sits in a corner and scowls at the lady. He is like the weak believer in virtue described by the satirist, and, having studied all that could teach him to do the right thing, never acquires the ability to do it. Yet this poor man, if a writer of romances, would probably endow the lover in his tale with the qualities he misses in himself, and with the more gusto from the sense of his own deficiencies. It is thus that Cowley wooes upon paper the mistress whom he never addressed in life. Hence the best advisers of our conduct are often those who are the least prudent in the regulation of their own. Their sense is clear when exerted for us, but vanity, humour, passion, blind them when they act for themselves.

There is a sort of wit peculiar to knowledge of the world, and we usually find that writers, who are supposed to have the most exhibited that knowledge in their books, are also commonly esteemed the wittiest authors of their country — Horace, Plautus, Molière, Le Sage, Voltaire, Cervantes, Shakspeare, Fielding, Swift; and this is, because the essence of the most refined species of wit *is truth*. Even in

the solemn and grave Tacitus, we come perpetually to sudden turns, striking points, of sententious brilliancy, which make us smile, from the depth itself of their importance; — an aphorism is always on the borders of an epigram.

It is remarkable that there is scarcely any very popular author of great imagination, in whose works we do not recognise that common sense which is knowledge of the world, and which is so generally supposed by the superficial to be in direct opposition to the imaginative faculty. When an author does not possess it eminently, he is never eminently *popular*, whatever be the dignity accorded to his station. Compare Scott and Shelley, the two most imaginative authors of their time. The one, in his wildest flights, never loses sight of common sense — there is an affinity between him and his humblest reader; nay, the more discursive the flight, the closer that affinity becomes. We are even more wrapped in the author when he is with his Spirits of the mountain and fell — or with 'the mighty dead' at Melrose — than when he is leading us through the humours of a guard-room, or confiding to us the interview of lovers. But Shelley disdained common sense. Of his 'Prince Athanase' we have no earthly comprehension — with his 'Prometheus' we have no human sympathies; and the grander he becomes, the less popular we find him. Writers who do not, in theory, know their kind, may be admired, but they

can never be lastingly popular. And when we hear men of unquestionable genius complain of not being appreciated by the herd, it is because they are not themselves skilled in the feelings of the herd. For what is knowledge of mankind, but the knowledge of their feelings, their humours, their caprices, their passions? — Touch these, and you gain attention — develop these, and you have conquered your audience.

Among writers of an inferior reputation we often discover a sufficient shrewdness and penetration into human foibles to startle us in details, while they cannot carry their knowledge far enough to please us on the whole. They can hit off some feature in nature by a happy stroke, but they violate all the likeness before they have concluded the picture — they charm us with a reflection and revolt us by a character. Sir John Suckling is one of these writers: his correspondence is witty and thoughtful, and his plays — but little known in comparison with his songs — abound with just remarks and false positions, the most natural lines and the most improbable inventions. Two persons in one of these plays are under sentence of execution, and the poet hits off the vanity of the one by a stroke worthy of a much greater dramatist.

"I have something troubles me," says Pellagrin.

"What's that?" asks his friend.

"The people," replies Pellagrin, "will say, as we go along '*thou art the properer fellow!*'"

Had the whole character been conceived like that sentence, I should not have forgotten the name of the play, and, instead of making a joke, the author would have consummated a creation. Both Madame de Staël and Rousseau appear to me to have possessed this sort of imperfect knowledge. Both are great in aphorisms, and feeble in realising conceptions of flesh and blood. When Madame de Staël tells us "that great losses, so far from binding men more closely to the advantages they still have left, at once loosen all ties of affection," she speaks like one versed in the mysteries of the human heart, and expresses exactly what she wishes to convey; but when she draws the character of Corinne's lover, she not only confounds opposite moral qualities into one impossible compound, but she utterly fails in what she evidently attempts to portray. The proud, sensitive, generous, highminded Englishman, with a soul at once alive to genius, and fearing its effects — daring as a soldier, timid as a man — the slave of love that tells him to scorn the world, and of opinion that tells him to revere it — this is the new, the delicate, the many-coloured character Madame de Staël conceived, and nothing can be more unlike the heartless and whining pedant she has created.

In Rousseau's 'Julie,' every sentence Lord Edouard utters is full of beauty, and sometimes of depth, and

yet those sentences give us no conception of the utterer himself. The expressions are all soul, and the character is all clay — nothing can be more brilliant than the sentiments, nor more heavy than the speaker.

It is a curious fact, that the graver writers have not often succeeded in plot and character in proportion to their success in the allurements of reflection, or the graces of style. While Goldsmith makes us acquainted with all the personages of his unrivalled story — while we sit at the threshold in the summer evenings and sympathise with the good vicar in his laudable zeal for monogamy — while ever and anon we steal a look behind through the lattice, and smile at the gay Sophia, who is playing with Dick, or fix our admiration on Olivia, who is practising an air against the young squire comes — while we see the sturdy Burchell crossing the stile, and striding on at his hearty pace with his oak cudgel cutting circles in the air — nay, while we ride with Moses to make his bargains, and prick up our ears when Mr. Jenkinson begins with "Ay, sir! the world is in its dotage;" — while, in recalling the characters of that immortal tale, we are recalling the memory of so many living persons with whom we have dined, and walked, and argued — we behold in the gloomy 'Rasselas' of Goldsmith's sager contemporary a dim succession of shadowy images without life or identity — mere ma-

chines for the grinding of morals, and the nice location of sonorous phrases. Perhaps, indeed, Humour is an essential requisite in the delineation of actual character. The greatest masters of modern tragedy — Shakspeare, Corneille, Racine — are writers of comedies, and of comedies more indebted to humour than to wit for the hold they retain upon audiences and readers.

That delightful egotist — half-goodfellow, half-sage, half-rake, half-divine, the pet gossip of philosophy, — the inimitable and unimitated Montaigne, insists upon it in right earnest, that *continual* cheerfulness is the most indisputable sign of Wisdom, "whose estate, like that of things in the regions above the moon, is always calm, cloudless, and serene." And in the same essay he recites the old story of Demetrius the grammarian, who, finding a knot of philosophers chatting away in high glee and comfort, said, "I am greatly mistaken, gentlemen, or by your pleasant countenances you are not engaged in any very profound discourse." Whereon Heracleon answered the grammarian with a "Pshaw, my good friend! it does very well for fellows who live in a perpetual anxiety to know whether the future tense of the verb *Ballo* should be spelt with one *l* or two, to knit their brows and look solemn; but we who are engaged in discussing true philosophy, are cheerful as a matter of course." Heracleon

knew what he was about when he resolved to be wise. And yet, after all, it is our constitution and not our learning that makes us one thing or the other — grave or gay, lively or severe! We may form our philosophy in one school, but our feelings may impel us to another; and while our tenets rejoice with Democritus, our hearts may despond with Heraclitus. And, in fact, it requires not only all that our wisdom can teach us, but perhaps, also something of a constitution of mind naturally sanguine and elastic, to transmute into golden result the baser ores of our knowledge of the world. Deceit and disappointment are but sorry stimulants to the spirits! "The pleasure of the honey will not pay for the smart of the sting."*

As we know, or fancy that we know, mankind, a certain dimness falls upon the glory of all we see. "The lily is withered, the purple of the violet turned into paleness;"** without growing perhaps more selfish, we contract the circle of our enjoyments. We do not hazard — we do not venture as we once did. The sea that rolls before us proffers to our curiosity no port that we have not already seen. About this time, too, our ambition changes its character — it

* Jeremy Taylor: Sermon VI. Part II.

** Jeremy Taylor: 'Contemplations of the State of Man.'

becomes more a thing of custom than of ardour. We have begun our career — shame forbids us to leave it; but I question whether any man, moderately wise, does not see how small is the reward of pursuit. Nay, ask the oldest, the most hackneyed adventurer of the world, and you will find he has some dream at his heart which is more cherished than all the honours he seeks — some dream perhaps of a happy and serene retirement, which has lain at his breast since he was a boy, and which he will never realise. The trader and his retreat at Highgate are but the type of Walpole and his palace at Houghton. The worst feature in our knowledge of the world is, that we are wise to little purpose — we form a skilful diagnosis of complaints in the hearts of others; we attempt not by change of regimen to still the disordered movements which warn us of disease in our own. Every wise man feels that he ought not to be ambitious, nor covetous, nor the slave of any passionate emotion; yet the wisest go on toiling and burning to the last. Men who have declaimed most against ambition have been among the most ambitious; so that, at the best, we only become wise for the sake of writing books which the world seldom values till we are dead — or of making speeches, which, when dead, the world hastens to forget. "When all is done, human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played

with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over."*

* Sir William Temple.

(*Continuation in* VOL. IV.)

END OF VOL. III.

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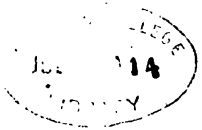

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ESSAYS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

(CONTINUED.)

THE TALE OF KOSEM KESAMIM, THE MAGICIAN.*

* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

It was deep night, and the Magician suddenly stood before me. "Arise," said he, "and let us go forth upon the surface of the world."** I rose, and followed the sorcerer until we arrived at the entrance of a cavern. Pursuing its subterranean course for some minutes, — with the rushing sound of imprisoned waters loud and wild upon the ear, we came at length into a colder and fresher atmosphere;

* This tale, complete in itself, is extracted from an unfinished romance, which, however, furnished the groundwork for 'Zanoni.' I may add that I find the outline of this tale in some papers written in my schooldays.

** The Narrator is supposed to have been with the Magician amidst the caverns of the interior of the Earth.

and presently, through a fissure in the rock, the sudden whiteness of the moon broke in, and partially lit up walls radiant with spars, and washed by a deep stream that wound its mysterious way to the upper air. And now, gliding through the chasm, we stood in a broad cell, with its lofty arch open to the sea. Column and spire, brilliant with various crystallizations — spars of all hues, sprang lightly up on either side of this cavern; and with a leap and a mighty voice, the stream, whose course we had been tracking, rushed into the arms of the great sea. Upon that sea, star after star mirrored its solemn lustre; and the moon, clad in a fuller splendour than I had ever before seen gathered round her melancholy orb, filled the cavern with a light, which was to the light of day what the life of a spirit is to that of a mortal. Passionless, yet tender — steadfast — mystic — unwavering — she shone upon the glittering spars; and in a long line, from the cavern to the verge of heaven, her sweet face breathed a quiet joy into the rippling billows — "smiles of the sea." A few thin and fleecy clouds alone varied the clear expanse of the heavens. And,

"Beautiful," said I, "is this outward world! — your dim realms beneath have nothing to compare with it. There are no stars in the temples of the hidden earth — and one glimpse from the lovely moon is worth all the witchfires and meteors of the giant palaces below."

"Young mortal," said the Wizard in his mournful voice, "thou beholdest my native shore. Beside that sea stood my ancestral halls — and beneath that moon first swelled within my bosom the deep tides of human emotion — and in this cavern, whence we now look forth on the seas and heavens, my youth passed some of its earnest hours in contemplations never known to your lesser race clogged with the mire of ages: for that epoch lies remote in primeval times, which even tradition scarcely pierces. Your first fathers — what of their knowledge know ye? — what of their secrets have ye retained? Their vast and solemn minds were never fathomed by the plummet of your researches. The waves of the black Night have swept over the ancient world; and you can only guess of its buried glories by the shivered fragments which, ever and anon, Chance casts upon the shores of the modern Time."

"Do we sink, then," said I, "by comparison with the men of those distant dates? Is not our lore deeper and more certain? Was not their knowledge the imperfect offspring of confused conjecture? Did they not live among dreams and shadows, and make Truth herself the creature of fantastic Fable?"

"Nay," replied the shrouded and uncertain form beside me, "their knowledge pierced into the heart of things. They consulted the stars — but it was to measure the dooms of earth; and could we recall

from the dust their perished scrolls, you would behold the mirror of the living times. . Their prophecies, wrung from the toil and rapture of those powers which ye suffer to sleep, quenched, within the soul, traversed the wilds of ages, and pointed out among savage hordes the cities and laws of empires yet to be. Ten thousand arts have mouldered from the earth, and Science is the shadow of what it was. Young mortal, thou hast set thine heart upon Wisdom — thou hast wasted the radiant hours of opening life amidst the wearisome thoughts of doting sages: thou hast laboured after Knowledge, and in that labour the healthful hues have left thy cheek, and the worm of decay creeps into the core of thy youth while the dew is yet upon its leaf: — and for this labour — and in the transport and the vision that the soul's labour nurtures — thy spirit is now rapt from its fleshly career on earth, — wandering at will among the chasms and mines wombed within the world — breathing a vital air among the dead, — comraded by Spirits and the Powers that are not of flesh, — and catching, by imperfect glimpse and shadowy type, some knowledge of the arch mysteries of Creation; — and thou beholdest in me and in my science that which thy learning and thy fancy tracked not before. No legend ever chanced upon my strange and solemn being: nor does aught of my nature resemble the tales of wizard or sorcerer that the vulgar fantasies

of superstition have embodied. Thou hast journeyed over a land without a chart, and in which even fable has hackneyed not the truth. Thou wouldst learn something of the Being thus permitted to thy wonder; — be it so. Under these sparkling arches — and before my ancestral sea — and beneath the listening ear of the halting moon — thou shalt learn a history of the antique world."

"THE TALE OF KOSEM KESAMIM.

"Along the shores which for thirty centuries no human foot has trod, and upon plains where now not one stone stands upon another, telling even of decay — was once the city and the empire of the Wise Kings; for so termed by their neighbours were the monarchs that ruled this country. Generation after generation they had toiled to earn and preserve that name. Amidst the gloom of mysterious temples and the oracular learning of the star-read priests, the youth of each succeeding king was reared into a grave and brooding manhood. Their whole lives were mystery. Wrapped in the sepulchral grandeur of the imperial palace; seen rarely, like gods, they sent forth, as from a cloud, the light of their dread but benignant laws: the courses of their life were tracked not — but they were believed to possess a power over the seasons and

elements, and to summon, at their will, the large-winged spirits that flit to and fro across the earth, governing, like dreams, with a vague and unpenetrated power the destiny of nations and the career of kings.

There was born to this imperial race a son, to whom seer and king alike foretold a strange and preternatural fate. His childhood itself was of a silent, stern, and contemplative nature. And his learning, even in his boyish youth, had ransacked all that the grey priests could teach him.

But when wind encounters wind the meeting is warfare — the warfare is storm. Wind meets with wind when the mind of youth soars from earth to seek wisdom and the heart of youth ranges heaven to find love."

The Magician paused for a moment, and then, in a voice far different from the cold and solemn tone in which his accents were usually clothed, he broke forth: —

"O, beautiful, beyond the beauty of these sicklied and hoary times, was the beauty of Woman in the young world! The glory of Eden had not yet departed from her face, and the lustre of unwearied Nature glowed alike upon earth and earth's majestic daughters. Age after age Man invents and deserts some worship of idols in his yearning for symbols of a Power beyond the reach of his vision and the guess of his reason. But never yet has he forsaken

the oldest idolatry of all — the adoration of earthly beauty as the fairest image of celestial good. Yet to me, for I am that prince of whose throne and whose people no record in Time remains, — to me even the love of Beauty was a passion less ardent than the desire of Knowledge! My mind launched itself into the depth of things — I loved step after step to trace effect to its first cause. Reason was a chain from heaven to earth, and every link led me to aspire to the stars themselves. And the wisdom of my wise fathers was mine; I knew the secret of the elements, and could charm them into slumber, or arouse them into war. The mysteries of that dread chemistry which is now among the sciences that sleep — by which we can command the air and walk on its viewless paths, by which we can wake the thunder, and summon the cloud, and rive the earth; the exercise of that high faculty — the Imagining Power — by which Fancy itself creates what it wills, and which, trained and exercised, can wake the spectres of the dead — and bring visible to the carnal eye the Genii that walk the world; — the watchful, straining, sleepless science, that can make a sage's volume of the stars; — these were mine, and yet I murmured — I repined! — what higher mysteries were yet left to learn! The acquisition of to-day was but the disappointment of the morrow, and the dispensation of my ambition was — to *desire!*

It was evening, and I went from the groves of the sacred temple to visit one whom I loved. The way spread over black and rugged masses of rock, amidst which the wild shrub and dark weed sprung rife and verdant; for the waste as yet was eloquent of some great revolution in the earlier epochs of the world — when change often trod the heels of change; and Earth was scarcely reconciled to the sameness of her calm career. And I stood beneath the tree where SHE was to meet me; my heart leaped within me as I saw her footsteps bounding along — she came with her sweet lips breathing the welcome of human love, and I laid my head on her bosom and was content.

And, "Oh," said she, "art thou proud of thy dawning fame? The seers speak of thee with wonder, and the priests bow their heads before thy name."

Then the passion of my soul broke forth, and I answered, — "What is this petty power that I possess, and what this barren knowledge? The great arch secret of all, I have toiled night after night to conquer, and I cannot attain it. What is it to command even the dark Spirits at war with Heaven — if we know not the nature of those whom we command? What I desire is not knowledge, but the source of knowledge. I wish that my eye should penetrate at once into the germ and cause of things: that when I look upon the outward beauty of the

world, my sight should pierce within, and see the mechanism which causes and generates the beauty working beneath. Enough of my art have I learned to know that there is a film over human eyes which prevents their penetrating beyond the surface; it is to remove that film, and dart into the essence, and survey the One Great Productive Spirit of all Things, that I labour and yearn in vain. All other knowledge is a cheat; this is the high prerogative which mocks at conjecture and equals us with a God!"

Then Lyciah saw that I was moved, and she soothed me into rest with the coo of her sweet songs.

Midnight had crept over the earth as I returned homeward across that savage scene. Rock heaped on rock bordered and broke upon the lonely valley that I crossed; and the moon was still, and shining, as at this hour, when its life is four thousand years nearer to its doom. Then suddenly I saw moving before me, with a tremulous motion, a meteoric Fire of an exceeding brightness. Ever as it moved above the seared and sterile soil, it soared and darted restlessly to and fro; and I thought, as it danced and quivered, that I heard it laugh from its burning centre with a wild and frantic joy. I fancied, as I gazed upon the Fire, that in that shape sported one of the children of the Elementary Genii; and, addressing it in their language, I bade

it assume a palpable form. But the Fire darted on unheedingly, save that now the laugh from amidst the flame came distinctly and fearfully on my ear. Then my hair stood erect, and my veins curdled, and my knees knocked together; I was under the influence of an awe; for I felt that the Power was not of this world, nor of any world of which the knowledge ye call magic had yet obtained a glimpse. My voice faltered, and thrice I strove to speak to the Light — but in vain; and when at length I addressed it in the solemn adjuration by which the sternest of the Fiends are bound, the Fire sprang up from the soil — towering aloft — with a livid but glorious lustre, bathing the whole atmosphere in its glare, — quenching, with an intenser ray, the splendours of the moon, — and losing its giant crest in the far Invisible of Heaven!

And a voice came forth, saying — "Thou callest upon inferior Spirits; I am that which thou hast pined to behold — I am The Living Principle of the World!"

I bowed my face, and covered it with my hands, and my voice left me; when again I looked round, behold, the Fire had shrunk from its momentary height, and was (now dwarfed and humble) creeping before me in its wavering and snake-like course. But fear was on me, and I fled, and fast fled the Fire by my side; and oft, but faint, from its ghastly

heart came the laugh that thrilled the marrow of my bones. The waste was past, and the giant temple of the One God rose before me; I rushed forward, and fell breathless by its silent altar. And there sat the High Priest; for night and day some one of the sacred host watched by the altar; he was of great age, and the tide of human emotion had ebbed from his veins; but even he was struck with my fear, and gazed upon me with his rayless eyes, and bade me be of cheer, for the place was holy. I looked round; the Fire was not visible, and I breathed freely; but I answered not the Priest, for years had dulled him into stone, and when I rose his eye followed me not. I gained the purple halls set apart for the king's son. And the pillars were of ivory inlaid with gold; the gems and perfumes of the East gave light and fragrance to the air; the gorgeous banquet was spread; and music from unseen hands swelled from floor to roof as I passed along. But lo! by the throne, crouching beneath the purple canopy, I saw the laughing Fire; and it seemed, lowly and paled, to implore protection. I paused, and took the courtiers aside, and asked them to mark the flame; but they saw it not — only for me did it gleam and burn. Then knew I that it was indeed a Spirit of that high race, which, even when they take visible form, are *not* visible save to the students of the Dread Science! And I trembled but revered.

And the Fire stayed by me night and day, and I grew accustomed to its light. But never, by charm nor spell, could I draw further word from it; and it followed my steps with a silent and patient homage. By degrees there came over me a vain and proud delight to think that I was so honoured; and I looked upon the changeful face of the Fire as upon the face of a friend.

There was a man who had told years beyond the memory of the living — a revered and famous soothsayer — to whom, in times of dread and omen, our priests and monarchs themselves repaired for warning and advice. I sought his abode. The Seer was not of our race — he came from the distant waters of the Nile, banished by the hierophants of Egypt for solutions more clear than their own of the mysteries of Osiris and Naith. It was in the very cavern in which we now stand that the Seer held his glittering home — lamp upon lamp then lighted up, from an unfailing naphtha, these dazzling spars, hailed as a beacon by the seamen who brought the merchandize of the world into yonder bay, then so loud and swarming, now so desolate and still. Hither had my feet often turned in boyhood, and from the shrivelled lips of the old Egyptian had much of my loftiest learning been gleaned; for he loved me; and seeing with a prophet eye far down the lengths of Time, he foretold the dates at which Nations should be no more; and yet, far as he could

look, beheld me living still; me, the infant he had cradled on his lap.

It was on that night, when the new moon scatters its rank and noxious influence over the foliage and life of earth, that I sought the Egyptian. The Fire burned with a fiercer and redder light than its wont, as it played and darted by my side. And when, winding by the silver sands, I passed into the entrance of the cave, I saw the old man sitting on a stone. As I entered, the Seer started from his seat in fear and terror — his eyes rolled — his thin grey hairs stood erect — a cold sweat broke from his brow — and the dread master stood before his pupil in agony and awe.

"Thou comest," muttered he with white lips. "What is by thy side? Hast thou dared to seek knowledge with the Soul of all Horror — with the ghastly Leper of ——? Avaunt! bid the fiend begone!"

His voice seemed to leave the old man, and with a shriek he fell upon his face on the ground.

"Is it," said I, appalled by his terror — "is it the Fire that haunts my steps at which thou tremblest? Behold, it is harmless as a dog; it burns not while it shines: if a fiend, it is a merry fiend, for I hear it laugh while I speak. But it is for this, dread sire, that I have sought thee. Canst thou tell me the nature of the Spirit? — for a Spirit it surely is. Canst thou tell me its end and aim?"

I lifted the old man from the earth, and his kingly heart returned to him: he took the wizard crown from the wall, and he placed it on his brows; for he was as a monarch among the Things that are not of clay. And he said to the Fire — "Approach!" The Fire glided to his knees. And he said, "Art thou the Spirit of the Element, and was thy cradle in the Flint's heart?"

And a voice from the flame answered "No."

And again the Egyptian trembled.

"What art thou, then?" said he.

And the Fire answered, "Thy Lord."

And the limbs of the Egyptian shook as if in the grasp of death.

And he said, "Art thou a Demon of *this* world?"

And the Fire answered, "I am the Life of this world — and I am *not* of other worlds."

"I know thee — I fear thee — I acknowledge thee!" said the Egyptian; "and in thy soft lap shall this crowned head soon be laid."

And the Fire laughed.

"But tell me," said I, — for, though my blood stood still, my soul was brave and stern — "Tell me, O seer! what hath this Thing with me?"

"It is the Great Ancestor of us all!" said the Egyptian, groaning.

"And knows it the secrets of the Past?"

"The secrets of the Past are locked within it."

"Can it teach me that which I pine to know? Can it teach me the essence of things — the nature of all I see? Can it raise the film from the human gaze?"

"Hush, rash prince!" cried the Egyptian, — "Seek not to know that which will curse thee with the knowledge. Ask not a power that would turn life into a living grave. All the lore that man ever knew is mine; but that secret have I shunned, and that power have I cast from me, as the shepherd casts the viper from his hand. Be moderate and be wise. And bid me exorcise the Spirit that accosts thee from the Fire!"

"Can it teach me the arch mystery? When I gaze upon the herb or flower, can it gift my gaze with the power to pierce into the cause and workings of its life?"

"I can teach thee this," said the Fire; and it rose higher, and burned more fiercely, as it spoke, till the lamps of naphtha paled before it.

"Then abide by me, O Spirit!" said I; "and let us not be severed."

"Miserable boy!" cried the Egyptian; "was this, then, the strange and preternatural doom which my Art foresaw was to be thine, though it deciphered not its nature? Knowest thou that this Fire, so clear — so pure — so beautiful — is ——"

"Beware!" cried the voice from the Fire; and

the crest of the flame rose, as the crest of a serpent about to spring upon its prey.

"Thou awest me not," said the Egyptian, though the blood fled from his shrivelled and tawny cheeks.

"Thou art ——"

"The Principle of the Living World," interrupted the voice.

"And thine other name?" cried the Egyptian.

"Thy Conqueror!" answered the voice; and straight as the answer went forth, the Egyptian fell, blasted as by lightning, a corpse at my feet. The light of the Fire played with a blue and tremulous lustre upon the carcase, and presently I beheld by that light that the corpse was already passed into the loathsomeness of decay — the flesh was rotting from the bones — and the worm and the creeping thing which the rottenness generates, twined in the very jaws and temples of the Sage.

I sickened and gasped for breath. — "Is this thy work, oh fearful fiend?" said I, shuddering. And the Fire, passing from the corpse, crept humbly to my feet; and its voice answered — "Whatever my power, it is thy slave!"

"Was that death thy work?" repeated my quivering lips.

"Thou knowest," answered the Fire, "that death is not the will of any Power — save One. The death came from His will, and I but exulted over the blow!"

I left the cavern; my art, subtle as it was, gave me no glimpse into the causes of the Egyptian's death. I looked upon the Fire, as it crept along the herbage, with an inquisitive, yet timorous eye. I felt an awe of the Demon's power; and yet the proud transport I had known in the subjection of that power was increased, and I walked with a lofty step at the thought that I should have so magnificent a slave. But the words of the mysterious Egyptian still rang in my ear — still I shuddered and recoiled before his denunciation of the secret I desired to know. And, as I passed along the starry solitude, the voice of the Fire addressed me with a sweet and persuasive tone. "Shrink not, young Sage," it said, or rather sang, "from a power beyond that of which thy wisest ancestors ever dreamed; lose not thy valour at the drivelling whispers of age: when did age ever approve what youth desires? Thou art formed for the destiny which belongs to royal hearts — the destiny courts thee. Why dost thou play the laggard?"

"Knowledge," said I, musingly, "can never be productive of woe. If it be knowledge thou canst give me, I will not shrink. Lo! I accept thy gift!"

The Fire played cheerily to and fro. And from the midst of it there stepped forth a pale and shadowy form, of female shape and of exceeding beauty; her face was indeed of no living wanness, and the limbs

were indistinct, and no roundness swelled from their vapoury robes; but the features were lovely as a dream, and long yellow hair — glowing as sunlight — fell adown her neck. "Thou wouldst pierce," said she, "to the Principle of the World. Thou wouldst that thine eye should penetrate into my fair and mystic dominion. But not yet; there is an ordeal to pass. To the Whole Knowledge thou must glide through the Imperfect!" Then the female kissed my eyes, and vanished, and with it vanished also the Fire.

Oh, beautiful! — Oh, wondrous! — Oh, divine! A scale had fallen from my sight — and a marvellous glory was called forth upon the face of earth. I saw millions and millions of spirits shooting to and fro athwart the air — spirits that my magic had never yet invoked — spirits of rainbow hues, and quivering with the joy which made their nature. Wherever I turned my gaze, life upon life was visible. Every blade of grass swarmed with myriads invisible to the common eye — but performing with mimic regularity all the courses of the human race; every grain of dust, every drop of water, was a world — mapped into countless tribes, all fulfilling mortal destinies through the agency of mortal instincts, — hunger and love and hate and contest. There was no void in space, no solitude in creation. Bending my eyes below, I saw emerging from the tiny hollows of the earth those fantastic and elfin

shapes that have been chiefly consecrated by your Northern Bards: forth they came merrily, merrily — now circling in choral dances, now chasing gossamers whose airy substance eludes the glass of science. If all around was life, it was the life of enchantment and harmony — a subtle, pervading element of delight. Speech left me for very joy, and I gazed, thrilled and breathless, around me — entered, as it were, into the innermost temple of the great system of the universe.

I looked round for the Fire — it was gone. I was alone amidst this new and populous creation, and I stretched myself voluptuously beneath a tree, to sate my soul with wonder. As a Poet in the height of his delirium was my rapture — my veins were filled with Poesy, which is intoxication — and my eyes had been touched with Poesy, which is the creative power — and the miracles before me were the things of Poesy, which is the enchanter's wand.

Days passed, and the bright Demon which had so gifted me appeared not, nor yet did the spell cease; but every hour, every moment, new marvels rose. I could not touch stone nor herb without coming into a new realm utterly different from those I had yet seen, but equally filled with life — so that there was never a want of novelty; and had I been doomed to pass my whole existence upon three feet of earth, I might have spent that existence in perpetual variety — in unsatisfied and eternally new

research. But most of all, when I sought Lyciah I rejoiced in the gift I possessed; for in conversing with her my sense penetrated to her heart, and I felt, as with a magnetic sympathy, moving through its transparent purity, the thoughts and emotions which were all my own.

By degrees I longed indeed to make her a sharer in my discovered realms; for I now slowly began to feel the weariness of a conqueror who reigns alone — none to share my power or partake the magnificence in which I dwelt.

One day, even in the midst of angelic things that floated blissfully round me — so that I heard the low melodies they hymned as they wheeled aloft — one day this pining, this sense of solitude in life — of satiety in glory — came on me with intense increase of force. And I said, "But this is the Imperfect state; why not achieve the Whole? Why not ascend to that high and empyreal Knowledge which admits of no dissatisfaction, because in itself complete? Bright Spirit," cried I aloud, "to whom I already owe so great a benefit, come to me now — why hast thou left me? Come and complete thy gifts. I see yet only the wonders of the secret portions of the world — touch mine eyes that I may see *the cause* of the wonders. I am surrounded with an air of life; let me pierce into the principle of that life. Bright Spirit, minister to thy servant!" Then I heard the sweet voice that had spoken in the Fire

— but I saw not the Fire itself. And the voice said unto me —

"Son of the Wise Kings, I am here!"

"I see thee not," said I. "Why hidest thou thy lustre?"

"Thou seest the Half, and that very sight blinds thee to the Whole. This redundant flow of life gushes from me as from its source. When the mid-course of the river is seen, who sees also its distant spring? In thee, not myself, is the cause that thou beholdest me not. I am as I was when I bowed my crest to thy feet; but thine eyes are not what then they were!"

"Thou tellest me strange things, O Demon!" said I; "for why, when admitted to a clearer sight of things, should my eyes be only darkened when they turn to thee?"

"Does not all knowledge, save the one right knowledge, only lead men from the discovery of the primal causes? As Imagination may soar aloft, and find new worlds, yet lose the solid truths of this one — so thou mayest rise into the regions of a preternatural lore, yet recede darklier and darklier from the clue to Nature herself."

I mused over the words of the Spirit, but their sense seemed dim.

"Canst thou not appear to me in thine old, wan, and undulating brightness?" said I after a pause.

"Not until thine eyes receive power to behold me."

"And when may I be worthy that power?"

"When thou art thoroughly dissatisfied with thy present gifts."

"Dread Demon, I am so now!"

"Wilt thou pass from this pleasant state at a hazard — not knowing that which may ensue? Behold, all around thee is full of glory, and musical with joy! Wilt thou abandon that state for a dark and perilous Unknown?"

"The Unknown is the passion of him who aspires to know."

"Pause; for there is terror in thy choice," said the Invisible.

"My heart beats steadily. — I brave whatsoever be the penalty that attends on my desire!"

"Thy wish is granted," said the Spirit.

Then straightway a pang, quick, sharp, agonising, shot through my heart. I felt the stream in my veins stand still, hardening into a congealed substance — my throat rattled, I struggled against the grasp of some iron power. A terrible sense of my own impotence seized me — my muscles refused my will, my voice fled — I was in the possession of some authority that had entered, and claimed, and usurped the citadel of my own self. Then came a creeping of the flesh, a numbing sensation of ice and utter coldness; and lastly, a blackness, deep and solid as

a mass of rock, fell over the whole earth — I had entered DEATH!

From this state I was roused by the voice of the Demon. "Awake, look forth! — Thou hast thy desire! — Abide the penalty!" The darkness broke from the earth; the ice thawed from my veins; once more my senses were my servants.

I looked, and behold, I stood in the same spot, but how changed! The earth was one crawling mass of putridity; its rich verdure, its lofty trees, its sublime mountains, its glancing waters, had all been the deceit of my previous blindness; the very green of the grass and the trees was rottenness, and the leaves (not each leaf one and inanimate as they seemed to the common eye) were composed of myriads of insects and puny reptiles, battened on the corruption from which they sprang. The waters swarmed with a leprous life — those beautiful shapes that I had seen in my late delusion were corrupt in their several parts, and from that corruption other creatures were generated living upon them. Every breath of air was *not* air, a thin and healthful fluid, but a wave of animalculæ, poisonous and fœtid; for the Air is the Arch Corrupter, hence all who breathe die; it is the slow, sure venom of Nature, pervading and rotting all things; the light of the heavens was the sickly, loathsome glare that steamed from the universal Death in Life. The World was one dead carcase, from which everything the World bore took

its being. There was not such a thing as beauty! — there was not such a thing as life that did not generate from its own corruption a loathsome life for others! I looked down upon myself, and saw that my very veins swarmed with a motelike creation of shapes, springing into hideous existence from mine own disease, and mocking the Human Destiny with the same career of life, love, and death. Methought it must be a spell, which change of scene would annul. I shut my eyes with a frantic horror, and I fled, fast, fast, but blinded; and ever as I fled a laugh rang in my ears. I stopped not till I was at the feet of Lyciah, for she was my first involuntary thought. Whenever a care or fear possessed me, I had been wont to fly to her bosom, and charm my heart by the magic of her sweet voice. I was at the feet of Lyciah — I clasped her knees — I looked up imploringly into her face — God of my Fathers! the same curse attended me still! Her beauty was gone. There was no whole, — no one life in that Being whom I had so adored. Her life was composed of a million lives; her stately shape, of atoms crumbling from each other, and so bringing about the ghastly state of corruption which reigned in all else around. Her delicate hues, her raven hair, her fragrant lips — Pah! What, what was my agony! I turned from her again, — I shrank in loathing from her embrace, — I fled once more, — on — on. I ascended a mountain, and looked down on the

various leprosies of Earth. Sternly I forced myself to the task; sternly I inhaled the knowledge I had sought; sternly I drank in the horrible penalty I had dared.

"Demon!" I cried, "appear, and receive my curse!"

"Lo, I am by thy side evermore," said the voice. Then I gazed, and, behold, the Fire was by my side; and I saw that it was the livid light which the jaws of Rottenness emits; and in the midst of the light, which was as its shroud and garment, stood a Giant shape — which was the shape of a Corpse that had been for months buried. I gazed upon the Demon with an appalled yet unquailing eye, and, as I gazed, I recognised in those ghastly lineaments a resemblance to the Female Spirit that had granted me the first fatal gift. But exaggerated, enlarged, dead, — Beauty rotted into Horror.

"I am that which thou didst ask to see face to face. — I am the Principle of Life."

"Of Life! Out, horrible mocker! — hast thou no other name?"

"I have! and that name — CORRUPTION!"

"Bright Lamps of Heaven!" I cried, lifting my eyes in anguish from the loathly charnel of the universal earth; "and is this, which men call Nature, — is this the sole Principle of the World?"

As I spoke, the huge carcase beneath my feet trembled. And over the face of the corpse beside

me there fell a fear. — And lo! the heavens were lit up with a pure and glorious light, and from the midst of them there came forth a Voice which rolled slowly over the charnel earth as the voice of thunder above the valley of the shepherd. "SUCH," said the Voice, "IS NATURE, IF THOU ACCEPTEST NATURE AS THE FIRST CAUSE — SUCH IS THE UNIVERSE WITHOUT A GOD!"

MANY-SIDEDNESS AND SELF-COMPLETION.

THE ambitious may be divided into two main classes — the first comprises those who strive to excel others; the second those who seek to improve themselves. Each man may say with the Poet,

"My mind to me a kingdom is;"

and surely a king may seek to develop all the resources of his kingdom without any desire of coming into collision and contest with the potentates of other realms.

This second class of the ambitious is, however, very limited in point of numbers, and its members are usually distinguished even in boyhood less by carrying off school-prizes than by exercising their faculties upon various things for which no school-prizes are given. They are thus, perhaps, somewhat underrated by the masters, but can scarcely fail of exciting the admiration of the boys. Indeed, as there must be a great deal of native vigour and warmth in the temperament which demands a wide

and diversified range for its energies, so in such boys there will generally be found an affluence of life and vivacity of animal spirits, which follow, as it were, their own irresistible impulse in acquiring distinction on the playground; — storing mental accomplishments without any apparent motive, such boys seem to acquire skill in bodily sports without any apparent effort. When they grow up they may or may not become eminent men, but they nearly always obtain the title of "accomplished." Should they mature into scholars or statesmen; should they settle quietly down into private life; still the word "accomplished" will be applied to them, whether as scholar, statesman, or gentleman.

This impulse towards general accomplishment is much less allied with Vanity, *i. e.* the undue love of approbation, than is commonly supposed; it is quite as often the unconscious instinct towards that self-development and enrichment by which Man seeks to complete himself as a whole. The impulse is encouraged by the examples which are set before the children of educated parents at the onset of their admission into the ancient classical world. The notion of individual self-completion, through the union of those accomplishments which are nowadays subdivided and kept apart, pervades the whole disciplined culture of Athenian life. The youth who wins the prize-garlands for gymnastics and music, becomes the poet of 'Antigone' and 'Œdipus,' the

colleague of Pericles in military command, and one of the leaders of a political revolution at the age of eighty-three.*

It is needless to show that such examples in the life of the ancient commonwealths are misleading and dangerous guides to modern ambition — even were it not a question whether Sophocles had not better have been only a great poet, since he certainly did not add to his fame by his skill as a general, nor perhaps by his sagacity as a politician. It is enough to own that the "all accomplishment" by which a small commonwealth sought, in completing the whole man, to secure to itself, in every condition of peace and war, the useful citizen, is, save in the rarest instances, an unattainable object of aspiration to the member of existent societies. The practical world soon checks and humbles that ambition in men who are destined to achieve success. Settled early to the pursuit of one career, or the mastery of a single art, he who would win the race must pause for no golden apples.

Yet for a short time, at least, that yearning for universal accomplishment, with a view to the adornment and completion of the intellectual man, has its uses, and uses that should last throughout our lives:

* Unless it be some other Sophocles who was appointed by Athens to the Council of Ten, after the destruction of the Sicilian armament.

without aiming in youth at the acquisition of many things, we should scarcely in manhood attain perfection in one. Insensibly, through a wide and desultory range, we gather together the vast hoard of thoughts and images — of practical illustrations of life — of comparisons of the multiform aspects of Truth, whether in men or books, which are the aids, and corroborants, and embellishments of the single and sole pursuit to which we finally attach ourselves. To an active mind it is astonishing what use may be made of every the pettiest acquisition. Gibbon tells us with solemn complacency of the assistance he derived for his immortal work — in the sieges it details and the strategy it expounds — from having served in the Militia! A much wider use of accomplishment is to be found in the instance of Milton: — what a wonderful copiousness of all knowledge, seemingly the most motley, the most incongruous, he has poured into his great poem! Milton is indeed an august example of the aspiration to self-completion, not only as to scope and strength, but as to ornament and grace. In the tastes and characteristics of his youth this severe republican, who has come down to the vulgar gaze in colours so stern though so sublime, rather presents to us the idealized image of the Elizabethan cavalier. Philip Sidney himself was not more the type of the all-accomplished and consummate gentleman. Beautiful in person — courtly in address — skilled in the gallant exercise

of arms — a master of each manlier as each softer art — versed in music — in song — in the languages of Europe — the admired gallant of the dames and nobles of Italy — the cynosure of all eyes "that rained influence and adjudged" — he, the destined Dante of England, was rather in his youth the brilliant personification of the mythical Crichton. In his later life we find the haughty patriot recurring, with a patrician pride, to all the accomplishments he had mastered — his skill on the sword as well as lute; and if we could furnish forth the outline of the education he prescribes as necessary to others, we should have no reason to complain that the versatility and the range of Athenian genius had passed away.*

* In his letter to Master Samuel Hartlib, Milton does indeed startle even the most ambitious of modern scholars. After declaring, in his own stately manner, that he calls "a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously *all* the offices of peace and *war*," he proceeds to chalk out a general outline of rational studies for young gentlemen between twelve and twenty-one: — Grammar, arithmetic, agriculture, natural history, geometry, astronomy, geography, fortification, architecture, engineering, navigation, history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures, as far as anatomy and the art of medicine. All this to be assisted by the "helpful experiences of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries, architects, engineers, miners, anatomists." And the above, by the

Yet this Greek yearning after all lore, not only that instructs, but embellishes, invariably exposes him who indulges it to two charges — superficiality and frivolity — the last accusations which he is likely to deserve. Perhaps no men are more superficial in their views than those who cultivate one branch of learning, and only one branch; — perhaps no men are less superficial than those who know the outlines of many. It is by constant comparisons of truth with truth, that we come to just and profound conclusions; the wider the range of comparisons, the more accurate our inferences. There is an experience of the intellect as well as of the observation,

by, before the tyro enters the "rural part of Virgil!" Then come ethics, theology, politics, law, as delivered first by Moses, and, "as far as human prudence can be trusted, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas;" and thence "to *all* the Roman edicts and tables, with their Justinian; and *so down to the Saxon and Common* laws of England, and the statutes." Join to this French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew; "whereto it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee and the Syrian dialect." Thus accomplished, the pupils are to be made poets, authors, orators; and in play-hours they are "to serve out the rudiments of soldiership, in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping, fortifying, besieging, and battering;" besides trips after the first two or three years (after which Milton gravely declares he would not be *much* for their studying) to our navy to learn the practical knowledge of sailing and sea-fight.

which never can be well attained by exclusive predilections and confined circles.

We find, therefore, in the deepest masters of the human heart, or of the human mind, an amazingly eager and miscellaneous appetite for knowledge of all sorts, small or great. The statesman who wrote the 'Prince,' wrote also comedies and a novel — a treatise on the military art — and poetry without end. Goethe was a botanist as well as a poet and a philosopher. Shakspeare seems, by the profuse allusions, "enamelling with pied flowers his thoughts of gold,"* to have diligently learned all that his age permitted to one self-educated and not versed betimes in the ancient languages or the physical sciences — yet even of these latter he had taught himself something. You find in him metaphors borrowed from the mechanical arts of life. It was an universal smattering which helped him to be profound. No less universal, no less accomplished, was Bacon, who may be called the Shakspeare of philosophy. With the same pen which demolished the Aristotelism of the schoolmen, he writes a treatise on the laws, a cure for the gout — the translation of a psalm, and an essay on plantations. The men who, on the contrary, are so careful to avoid the Superficial — who plummet only one source of learning, and think that, in order to penetrate to its

* Sir P. Sidney.

depth, no time can be spared to sport over other fountains, are usually shallow and headstrong theorists. They go round and round in a narrow circle, and never discover the outlet. Such a man was that pedant mentioned by Boyle, who had devoted his whole life to the study of a single mineral, and who owned he had not ascertained a hundredth part of its properties. These men are not only superficial, they are the truly frivolous — they grow so wedded to their one pursuit, that its pettiest and most insignificant details have a grandeur in their eyes. They are for ever poring over the animalculæ on a single leaf of the Eden tree: they cannot see things that are large — they are spending their lives in the midst of the prodigal world in considering the hundredth part of the properties of a mineral!

The critical sense of beauty in all its aspects, and the pure delight in beauty for its own sake, are keenest in those whose early years have passed in cultivating many faculties and many tastes — for which general culture they had no special motive in worldly distinctions and rewards. Many-sidedness is manifold enjoyment. For as the general design of the world is to please and not pain the sense of life in those who inhabit it — so the more all around them men open that world to the sense, the more they become sharers of the bounty that permeates its design. A landscape, a picture, a statue, a gem,

a peasant's cottage, a king's palace, if in its own way it be a thing to admire — he who has taught himself to comprehend and to love that which is admirable, enjoys as if it were part and parcel of his own possessions. Nay, if something be written, said, or done, even by a rival or enemy, which charms his sense of truth and beauty, he will forget the rival, forget the enemy, and enjoy for the moment the thing said, written, or done as if it were some happy interpretation of his own mind and heart.

Hence the great distinction between the many-sided and the one-sided critic. The first looks at "generals;" the second at "particulars." The first is more prone to be indulgent to particular faults, and to discover whatever beauty there may be in the general character of the work; the second more prone to enlarge on its particurlar faults, and to ignore the very nature and scope of its general character. So in life, the one-sided man is nearly always envious; the many-sided man very rarely so. For he who concentres all his claims for approval on one side of intellect will perpetually find rivals who, if less strong on that side, wound his self-love by superior strength on others; while he who is strong on many sides of his intellect easily consoles himself if overmastered on one. His kingdom does not rely upon a single fortress, and cannot be lost in a single battle.

The true obstacle to self-completion through diversified stores of experience and study is in the short duration of human life. So vast is the mind of man, so various his faculties, so measureless the range of observation to feed and to elicit its powers, that, if we had lived from the birth of the world till now, we could not have compassed a millionth part of that which our capacities, trained to the utmost, would enable us to grasp. — It requires an eternity to develop all the elements of the soul!

FERDINAND FITZROY;

OR,

TOO HANDSOME FOR ANYTHING.

"My dear friend," said I, the other day, to a mother who was expressing an anxious hope that her son should be as handsome as herself — "Believe me, that if beauty be a fatal gift to women it is an inconvenient one to men. A handsome face is very much against a young gentleman destined to the professions. An attorney takes an instinctive dislike to an Adonis of a barrister. What prudent man would like Antinous for his family physician? The envy of our sex (much more jealous than yours) will not acknowledge Wisdom unless it has a snub nose. When Apollo came to earth, the highest employment he could obtain was that of a shepherd."

"Pooh!" replied my fair friend — "Has it not been well said, that a handsome face is a letter of recommendation?"

"It is a Bellerophon letter, madam, and betrays while it recommends. Permit me to tell you the history of Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy."

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was one of those models of perfection of which a human father and mother can produce but a single example. Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was therefore an only son. He was so idolized by both his parents that they resolved to ruin him; accordingly, he was exceedingly spoiled, never annoyed by the sight of a book, and had as much plum-cake as he could eat. Happy would it have been for Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy could he always have eaten plum-cake and remained a child. "Never," says the Greek tragedian, "reckon a mortal happy till you have witnessed his end." A most beautiful creature was Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy! Such eyes — such hair — such teeth — such a figure — such manners, too, — and such an irresistible way of tying his neckcloth! When he was about sixteen, a crabbed old uncle represented to his parents the propriety of teaching Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy to read and write. Though not without some difficulty, he convinced them, — for he was exceedingly rich, and riches in an uncle are persuasive arguments in behalf of his advice for the culture of a nephew whose parents have but little to leave him. So our hero was sent to school. He was naturally a very sharp, clever boy; and at first he came on surprisingly in his learning. The schoolmaster's wife liked handsome lads. "What a genius will Master Ferdinand Fitzroy be, if you take pains with him!" said she to her husband.

"Pooh, my dear! it is of no use to take pains with *him*."

"And why, love?"

"Because he is a great deal too handsome ever to be a scholar."

"That's true enough, my dear!" said the schoolmaster's wife.

So, because he was too handsome to be a scholar, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy remained the lag of the fourth form!

They took our hero from school. "What profession shall he follow?" said his mother.

"My first-cousin is the lord-chancellor," said his father: "let him go to the bar."

The lord-chancellor dined there that day: Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was introduced to him. His lordship was a little, rough-faced, beetle-browed, hard-featured man, who thought beauty and idleness the same thing, and a parchment skin the legitimate complexion for a lawyer.

"Send him to the bar!" said he; "no, no, that will never do! — Send him into the army; he is much too handsome to become a lawyer."

"That's true enough," said the mother. So they bought Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy a cornetcy in the —regiment of Hussars.

Things are not learned by inspiration. Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy had never ridden at school, except when he was hoisted; he was, therefore, a very in-

different horseman; they sent him to the riding-school, and everybody laughed at him.

"Fitzroy is a spooney!" said Cornet Horsephiz, who was very ugly. "A coxcomb!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem, who was still uglier. "If he does not ride better, he will disgrace the regiment!" said Captain Rivalhate, who was very good-looking. "If he does not ride better, we will cut him!" said Colonel Everdrill, who was a wonderful martinet. "I say, Mr. Bumpemwell (to the riding-master), make that youngster ride less like a miller's sack."

"Pooh, sir! *he* will never ride better."

"And why the d—l will he not?"

"Bless you, colonel, he is a great deal too handsome for a cavalry officer!"

"True!" said Cornet Horsephiz.

"Very true!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem.

"We must cut him!" said the colonel.

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly cut.

Our hero was a youth of susceptibility — he quitted the —regiment, and challenged the colonel. The colonel was slightly wounded in the shoulder, but happening to die two months afterwards, his friends ascribed his death to Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, though the doctors ascribed it to suppressed gout.

"Those beauty-men are so vain," said Cornet Horsephiz, moralizing; "wound their vanity and they kill their colonels."

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, now without a profession,

returned to the purse of his disconsolate parents. They were not rich: but our hero was an only son, and they sponged hard upon the crabbed old uncle.

"He is very clever," said they both, "and would make a striking appearance in public life."

So they borrowed some thousands from the uncle, and bought his beautiful nephew a seat in parliament.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was ambitious, and desirous of retrieving his character. He fagged like a dragon — conned pamphlets and reviews — got Ricardo by heart — and made notes on the British constitution.

He rose to speak.

"What a handsome fellow!" whispered one member.

"Ah, a regular puppy!" said another.

"Never do for a speaker," said a third, very audibly.

And the gentlemen on the opposite benches sneered and *heared!* Impudence is only indigenous in Milesia, and an orator is not made in a day. Discouraged by his reception, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy grew a little embarrassed.

"Told you so!" said one of his neighbours.

"Fairly broke down!" said another.

"Too fond of his hair to have anything in his head," said a third, who was considered a wit.

"Hear, hear!" cried the gentlemen on the opposite benches.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy sat down — he had not shone; but, to say truth, he had not failed. Many a first-rate speaker has made a less flourishing commencement; and many a county member has been declared a phœnix of promise upon half his merit.

Not so thought the bald-headed prosers.

"Your Adonises never make orators," said a crack speaker with a wry nose.

"Nor men of business either," added the chairman of a finance committee, with a face like a kangaroo's.

"Poor devil!" said the civilest of the set. "He's a deuced deal too handsome for work! By Jove, he is going to speak again! — this will never do; we must cough him down!"

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly coughed down.

Our hero was now seven or eight-and-twenty, handsomer than ever, and the admiration of all the young ladies at Almack's.

"We have nothing to leave you," said the parents, who had long since spent their fortune, and now lived on the credit of having once enjoyed it. "You are the handsomest man in London; you must marry an heiress."

"I will," said Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was a charming young lady, with a hare-lip and six thousand a-year. To Miss Helen Convolvulus our hero paid his addresses.

Heavens! what a storm of anger those addresses aroused in the breasts of Miss Helen's relations! "Easy to see his mercenary intentions," said one: "a handsome fortune-hunter, who wants to make the best of his person!" — "handsome is that handsome does," said another; "he was turned out of the army, and murdered his colonel;" — "never marry a beauty," said a third; — "he can admire none but himself;" "will have so many mistresses," said a fourth; — "make you perpetually jealous," said a fifth; — "spend your fortune," said a sixth; "and break your heart," said a seventh.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was prudent and wary. She saw a great deal of justice in what was said; and was sufficiently contented with liberty and six thousand a-year, not to be highly impatient for a husband; but our heroine had no aversion to a lover; especially to so handsome a lover as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy. Accordingly she neither accepted nor discarded him; but kept him on hope, and suffered him to get into debt with his tailor and coachmaker, on the strength of becoming Mr. Fitzroy Convolvulus. Time went on, and excuses and delays were easily found; however, our hero was sanguine, and so were his parents. A breakfast at Chiswick, and a new kind of fever which had just come into fashion, carried off the latter, within one week of each other; but not till they had blessed Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy,

and rejoiced that they had left him so well provided for.

Now, then, our hero depended solely upon the crabbed old uncle and Miss Helen Convolvulus; — the former, though a baronet and a satirist, was a banker and a man of business: — he looked very distastefully at the Hyperion curls and white teeth of Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

"If I make you my heir," said he, "I expect you will continue the bank."

"Certainly, sir!" said the nephew.

"Humph!" grunted the uncle; "you are a very pretty fellow; — a very pretty fellow for a banker!"

Creditors pressed hard upon Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, and Mr. Ferdinand Fizroy pressed hard upon Miss Helen Convolvulus. "It is a dangerous thing," said she, timidly, "to marry a man so admired, — will you be always faithful?"

"By heaven!" cried the lover.

"Heigho!" sighed Miss Helen Convolvulus; and Lord Rufus Pumilion entering, the conversation was changed.

But the day of the marriage was fixed; and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy bought a new curricle. By Apollo, how handsome he looked in it! A month before the wedding-day the uncle died. Miss Helen Convolvulus was quite tender in her condolences —

"Cheer up, my Ferdinand," said she; "for your sake, I have discarded Lord Rufus Pumilion!" "Adorable condescension!" cried our hero; "but Lord Rufus Pumilion is only four feet two, and has hair like a peony."

"All men are not so handsome as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy!" was the reply.

Away goes our hero, to be present at the opening of his uncle's will.

"I leave," said the testator, "my share of the bank, and the whole of my fortune, legacies excepted, to" — here Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy wiped his beautiful eyes with his cambric handkerchief) "John Spriggs, an industrious, painstaking youth, who will do credit to the bank. I did once intend to have made my nephew Ferdinand my heir; but so curly a head can have no talent for accounts. I want my successor to be a man of business; and Mr. Ferdinand Fizroy is a great deal too handsome for a banker; his good looks will, no doubt, win him any heiress in town. Meanwhile, I leave him, to buy a dressing-case, a thousand pounds."

"A thousand devils!" cried Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, banging out of the room. He flew to his mistress. She was not at home. "Lies," says the Italian proverb, "have short legs;" but truths, if they are unpleasant, have terribly long ones! The next day Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy received a most obliging note of dismissal.

"I wish you every happiness," said Miss Helen Convolvulus, in conclusion: "but my friends are right! — you are much too handsome for a wife's peace of mind!"

And the week following, Miss Helen Convolvulus became Lady Rufus Pumilion!

"Alas! sir," said the bailiff, as a day or two after the dissolution of parliament he was jogging along with Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, in a hackney coach, bound to the King's Bench, — "Alas! sir, what a pity it is to take so handsome a gentleman to prison!"

JULIET'S TOMB IN VERONA.

"But I assure you, sir," said the Cicerone, "that there is nothing to see in it."

"More than in all Verona."

The Cicerone shrugged his shoulders, and we continued our way.

There is no town in Italy more interesting in its appearance than Verona. A quiet and venerable melancholy broods over its streets and houses. Its architecture of all forms — its peculiar casements and balconies — the half-Gothic, half-classic stamp of its antiquity, have, to my eyes, an inexpressible charm. I think to recognise something Shakspearian in the aspect of the place — it accords well with the memories with which he has associated it sreverent name; and I own that I trod its motley streets with a less respect for its history than for its immortal legend. For, was it not here that the gay Mercutio and the haughty Tybalt ran their brief career? — along these very streets went the masqued troop, with their torch-bearers and merry musie, on the night that Romeo made himself a guest in the halls of Capulet, and

won the heart of the impassioned Juliet? — the Gothic lattice, the frequent balcony, the gardens seen through the iron gates that close yonder ancient court — do they not all breathe of Romeo, of Shakspeare, of Romance? Of that Romance which is steeped in the colours of so passionate, so intoxicating a love, that, in order even to comprehend it, we must lift ourselves out of our common and worldly nature — we must rise from what our youth has been made by the arid cares and calculating schemes of life — we must shut ourselves up, as it were, in a chamber of sweet dreams from which all realities must be rigidly excluded. We must call back to the heart, to the sense, to the whole frame, its first youth. We must feel the blood pass through the veins as an elixir, and imagine that we are yet in that first era of the world when, according to the Grecian superstition, Love was the only deity that existed, and his breath inspired Nature with a soul. Then, and but then, can we see what faithful types of Humanity are Romeo and Juliet. For the great characteristic of their love is youth — the sparkling and divine freshness of first years; — its luxuriant imagination, its suddenness, and yet its depth — the conceits and fantasies which find common language too tame, and wander into sweet extravagance from the very truth of the passion; all this belongs but to the flush and May of life, the beauty of our years — the sunny surface of the golden well. You see at once the

youngness of that love, if you compare it with the love of Antony and Cleopatra, in another and no less wonderful tragedy of the great Master's. The love in either tale ascends from the level of human emotions — it is the love of warmer hearts and stronger natures than the world knows. But the one is the love which demands luxury and pomp — it dispenses with glory, but not with magnificence — it lies

> "In a pavilion — cloth of gold — of tissue
> O'er picturing that Venus, where we see
> The fancy outwork Nature."

Take away the majesty from that love, and it sinks into the gross passion of a hoary dotard and an old coquette. But everything about the love of Juliet is young; pure even in its passion; it does not lose worlds, but it can dispense with the world itself; it asks no purple canopies, no regal feasts — its wine is rich enough without dissolving pearls in its sparkling freshness — it is precisely that love which belongs to the beautiful inexperience of the passionate girl — it is the incarnation of passion, solely because it is the incarnation of youth. And there, in that barn attached to the convent of the Franciscans — the very convent of the good old friar of the tale — no roof above, the damp mould below the broken, oblong sepulchre itself half-filled with water, is the tomb of the being made by genius as familiar to us as if she

had really moved and lived before our eyes; — as if we had gazed upon her face in the revel, and listened to her voice from the moonlit balcony. Nothing can equal the sadness and gloom of the spot. On the walls yet remain two old and faded frescoes depicting the religious subjects favoured by Italian art — morning and night the dews fall through the roofless hovel, and the melancholy stars gleam on the tomb whence the very dust is gone. It has not even the grandeur of desolation — it is no splendid sepulchre, no cathedral aisle, no high-arched roof impressing you with awe. A heap of fagots piled carelessly at one end of the outhouse proves the little veneration in which the place is held; — the old tomb, with its pillow of stone, is but a broken cistern to the eyes of the brethren of the convent. Beautiful daughter of the Capulet! none care for thee, thy love or thy memories, save the stranger from the far isle whom a Northern minstrel hath taught to weep for thee! It is this peculiar dreariness, this want of harmony between the spot and the associations, which make the scene so impressive. The eager, tender, ardent Juliet — every thought a passion — the very Hebè of Romance — never fated to be old — and this damp, unregarded hovel, strewed with vile lumber or profaned to rude uses. What a contrast! what a cynical rebuke to human affections! Had it been a green spot in some quiet valley, the tomb would have impressed us with sweet not sorrowful

associations. We should have felt the soft steps of the appropriate spirit of the place, and dreamed back the dreams of poetry as in Petrarch's Arqua or in Egeria's grotto. But there is no poetry here! — all is stern and positive: the loveliest vision of Shakspeare surrounded by the hardest realities of Crabbe. And afar in the city rise the gorgeous tombs of the Scaligers — the family of that Duke of Verona who is but a pageant, a thing of foil and glitter, in the machinery of that enchanting tale; — ten thousand florins of gold had been spent by one of those princes in adorning a palace for his dust. Fretted and arched in all the elaborate tracery of the fourteenth century, those feudal tombs make yet the pride and boast of Verona; and to Her whose tale more ennobles the city than the records of all its Dukes — this grey stone, and this mouldering barn!

The old woman who showed the place had something in her of the picturesque — aged, and wrinkled, and hideous, with her hard hand impatiently stretched out for the petty coin which was to pay for admission to the spot. She suited well with all the rest. She increased the pathos that belongs to the deserted sanctuary. How little could she feel that nothing in Verona was so precious to the 'Zingaro' as this miserable hovel! And if it should not be Juliet's tomb after all! — Out, sceptic! — the tradition goes far back — the dull Veronese themselves do not ques-

tion it! Why should we? That which made the passion and the glory of our youth — the Juliet of the heart — when once it has died and left us, lies not its tomb within us, little heeded, but never disenhallowed; surrounded by the lumber of commonplace cares and uses, yet, in itself, still prized and sacred as the memorial of a gone romance?

CONVERSATIONS WITH AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT IN HIS LAST ILLNESS.

NOTE.

THESE Dialogues complete the early Essays first collected under the title of 'The Student.' They were written with the design of showing the stages of reading, reflection, and of such experience of the passions as is more or less commonly acquired in youth, through which a studious mind may be supposed to have passed successively before arriving at the ambition of originating new forms out of the materials it had collected — viz. the ambition of creative authorship; and at the moment that ambition became earnestly conceived Death comes to arrest its career and transfer to another life the hopes denied fruition in this one. The design in itself is, I believe, original, but its execution ought to have been deferred to a maturer age. The variety of subjects embraced in the Dialogues, and the importance of some of them, are too much for the grasp of a very young writer. Still, as both the speakers in the Dialogue are represented as young, the very defects of the composition may serve the more truthfully to represent the hardihood with which youth is accustomed to pass judgment on the subjects which engage its interest, the freedom with which it admits sentiment and fancy into provinces of critical inquiry or abstract speculation that rightfully belong to severer exercise of thought; and that florid redundance of imagery which characterises the age in which imagination predominates. For this reason I have, though not without hesitation, included these dialogues in the present collection.

CONVERSATIONS WITH AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT IN HIS LAST ILLNESS.

I HAVE always loved the old form of dialogue; not, indeed, so much for investigating truth, as for speaking of truths after an easy yet not uncritical nor hasty fashion. More familiar than the Essay, more impressed with the attraction of individual character, the Dialogue has also the illustrious examples of old — to associate with no commonplace nor ignoble recollections the class to which it belongs. I have held of late some conversations, that do not seem to me altogether uninteresting with a man whom I have long considered of a singular and original character. I have obtained his permission to make these conversations public. They are necessarily of a desultory nature — they embrace a variety of topics — they are marked and individualised only by that poetical and half-fantastic philosophy which belongs to my friend, and that melancholy colouring which befits a picture that has Death in the background.

If in their diction they should appear now too ornate — now too careless — I can only say that they faithfully represent the tone of conversation which in excited moments is the characteristic of the principal speaker. — Would that, while I detail the inanimate words, I could convey to the reader the aspect, the expression, the smile, the accents low and musical, that lent all its charm to their meaning. As it is, they would remain altogether untold, were it not for my friend's conviction that his end draws near, and I did not see sufficient in his appearance to forbid the hope that he can linger many months beyond the present date. To his mind, whatever be its capacities, its cultivation, its aspirings, matured offspring is forbidden. These fugitive tokens of all he acquired, or thought, or felt, are, if we read aright human probabilities, the sole testimony that he will leave behind him; not a monument, — but at least a few leaves scattered upon his grave. I feel a pain in writing the above words, but will he? — No! or he has wronged himself. He looks from the little inn of his mortality, and anticipates the long summer journey before him; he repines not to-day that he must depart to-morrow.

On Saturday last, November 13th, I rode to L—'s habitation, which is some miles from my own home. The day was cold, but I found him with the windows of his room open, and feeding an old favourite in the shape of a squirrel, that had formerly

been a tame companion. L—, on arriving at his present abode, had released it; but it came from the little copse in front of the windows every day to see its former master, and to receive some proof of remembrance from his good-natured hospitality.

CONVERSATION THE FIRST.

The Universality of Evil in the World: is no less visible in the lesser creatures than in Man — The hope of Perfectibility — Change in the temperament of L—— — What is pleasant when recalled is often wearisome when acted — Love — Society exacts in proportion as it is prepared to admire — L——'s sadness — Distinctions between Wit and Humour — Our inability to conceive the nature of our happiness hereafter — Anecdote of Fuseli — Plato — Quotation from Lord Herbert of Cherbury — The sentiment that our faculties cannot content themselves in this life visible in the works of Genius — This sentiment more common in the English than the Continental Poets — The Spirituality of Goethe's genius — Observation in the 'Wilhelm Meister' — The Painter Blake, and his Illustration of the 'Night Thoughts' — Young — His gloom spreads only over this world, without darkening the next.

"After all," said L—, "though the short and simple annals of the poor are often miserable enough, no peasant lives so wretched a life as the less noble animals, whom we are sometimes tempted to believe more physically happy. Observe how uneasily this poor squirrel looks around him. He is subject to perpetual terror from a large Angola cat, which my housekeeper chooses to retain in our domestic service,

and which has twice very nearly devoured my nervous little hermit. In how large a proportion of creatures is existence composed of one ruling passion — the most agonising of all sensations — *Fear!* No; human life is but a Rembrandt kind of picture at the best; yet we have no cause to think there are brighter colours in the brute world. Fish are devoured by intestinal worms; birds are subject to continual diseases, some of a very torturing nature. Look at yon ant-hill, what a melancholy mockery of our kind — what eternal wars between one hill and another — what wrong — what violence! You know the red ants invade the camps of the black, and bear off the young of these little negroes to be slaves to their victors. When I see throughout all nature the same miseries, the same evil passions, whose effects are crime with us, but whose cause is instinct with the brutes, I confess there are moments when I feel almost inclined to despond of our ultimate destinies in this world: almost compelled to surrender the noblest earthly hope that man ever formed, and which is solely the offspring of modern times — the hope of human perfectibility.

A. You have inclined, then, to the eloquent madness of Condorcet and De Staël! You have believed, then, in spite of the countless ages before us, in which the great successions of human kind are recorded by the Persian epitome of Universal History, "They were born, they were wretched, they died," — you

have believed, despite so long, so uniform, so mournful an experience — despite, too, our physical conformation, which, even in the healthiest and the strongest, subjects the body to so many afflictions, and therefore the mind to so many infirmities — you have believed that we yet may belie the past, cast off the slough of sin, and, gliding into the full light of knowledge, become as angels in the sight of God — you have believed, in a word, that, even on this earth, by maturing in wisdom we may ripen to perfection.

L. What else does the age we live in betoken? Look around; not an inanimate object, not a block of wood, not a bolt of iron,

> "But doth suffer an *earth*-change
> Into something rich and strange."

Wherever Man applies his intellect, behold how he triumphs. What marvellous improvements in every art, every ornament, every luxury of life! Why not these improvements ultimately in life itself? Are we "the very fiend's Archmock," that we can reform everything, save that which will alone enable us to enjoy our victory — *the human heart?* In vain we grasp all things without, if we have no command over the things within. No! Institutions are mellowing into a brighter form; with Institutions the Character will expand: it will swell from the weak bonds of

our foibles and our vices; and if we are fated never to become perfect, we shall at least advance eternally *towards* perfection.

A. Our conversation has fallen on a topic graver than usual; but these times give, as it were, a solemn and prophetic tone to all men who think, and are not yet summoned to act. I feel as if I stood behind a veil stretched across another and an unknown world, and waited in expectation, and yet in awe, the hand that was to tear it away.

L. Ay, I envy you at times (but not always) the long and bright career which, in these days, is opened to a wise man's ambition; you may live to tread it; you have activity and ardour; and, whether you fall or rise, the step forward you will at least adventure. But I am a bird chained, and the moment my chain is broken my course is heavenward. After all, what preacher of human vanities is like the Flesh, which is yet their author? Two years ago my limbs were firm, my blood buoyant — how boundless was my ambition! Now my constitution is gone — and so perish my desires of glory. You and I, A—, entered the world together.

A. Yes, — yet with what different tempers!

L. True: you were less versatile, more reserved, more solidly ambitious, than myself; your tone of mind was more solemn, mine more eager: life has changed our dispositions, because it has altered our frames. That was a merry year, our first of liberty

and pleasure! — but when the sparkle leaves the cup, how flat is the draught! How much of the grave wisdom of manhood results from the light follies of youth!

A. Yet shall we not exclaim, with Boileau,

"Souvent de tous nos maux la raisou est le pire"?

Those follies were pleasant —

L. They seem so when we remember them; were they so when they were indulged? The faults of youth are mostly those of the head; but are not the follies of youth mostly those of the heart? and wherever the heart invites a folly does it not admit a sorrow? Lightly as the poets of old looked upon those fugitive loves which constitute the main follies of the young, do they not truly represent their frivolous Cupid as a cruel god

"Semper ardentes acuens sagittas
Cote cruenta"?

I do not regret that I am no longer the butt of his arrows, — and those that leave the slightest scar behind them were perhaps those which inflicted the sorest pain at the time, —

Me —
"— jam nec spes animi credula mutui,
Nec certare juvat mero
Nec vincire novis tempora floribus."

A. Nay, say what you will, you had some bright moments in your first year of the world — I remember you the admired of all, the admirer of how many?

L. I was young, rich, well-born; and I had an elastic and gay temper. See all my claims to notice! But the instant my high spirits forsook me, society cooled. It is not quite true that adventitious claims alone, unless of the highest order, give one a permanent place in the charmed circle of the Armidas of our age. Society is a feast where every man must contribute his quota, and when our seat at the table is noted as the home of silence and gloom, we are soon left to enjoy our meditations alone. Besides, the secret of fashion is to surprise, and never to disappoint. If you have no reputation for wit, you may succeed without it; if you have, people do not forgive you for falling below their expectations: they attribute your silence to your disdain; they see the lion, and are contented to go away; to abuse him, and to see him no more.

A. I have often been surprised to remark you so contented with silence, whom I have known, in some circles, so brilliant.

L. There is no mystery in my content; it is in spite of myself. I have always preached up the morality of cheerfulness; if I do not practise it, it is because I cannot. About two years ago my spirits suddenly fled me. In vain I endeavoured to rally

them: in vain to force myself into the world — in vain. "I heard music, and wooed the smile of woman;" a sort of stupor seized and possessed me — I have never in mixed society been able, since that time, to shake it off: since then, too, I have slowly wasted away without any visible disease, and I am now literally dying of no disorder but the inability to live.

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L. Speaking of wit, I met at a dinner, a few months ago, M— and W— I—, and two or three other persons, eminent, and deservedly, both for wit and for humour. One of them, I think M—, said that some one or other had wit but no humour; it was asserted, on the other hand, that the person spoken of had humour but no wit. I asked the disputants to define the difference between wit and humour, and of course they were struck dumb.

A. No rare instance of the essence of dispute, which consists in making every one allow what nobody understands.

L. Perhaps so; but really, to understand a thing thoroughly is less necessary than you or I think for. Each of the disputants knew very well what he meant, but he could not explain; the difference was clear enough to serve his own mind as a guide, but, not being analysed, it was not clear enough to be of use to others. Wit is the philosopher's quality

— humour the poet's; the nature of wit relates to things, humour to persons. Wit utters brilliant general truths, humour delicate deductions from the knowledge of individual character: in Rochefoucauld we find wit; in the Vicar of Wakefield humour.

A. Your definition is not thoroughly satisfactory, for by it you would imply qualities in a writer that would be more or less antagonistic, and rarely, at least, combined in the same person. Yet most authors eminent for the one have been very largely endowed with the other. If Shakspeare and Cervantes are prodigals in humour, certainly they are no niggards in wit. The same may be said of Aristophanes and Horace, of Rabelais and Swift. On the other hand, writers chiefly famous for wit have seldom been deficient in humour. The wit of Voltaire is incontestable, but any definition of humour would be sadly in fault if it excluded from its pale the characters in 'Candide.'

L. I do not think you have proved my definition to be unsatisfactory. You assume that it implies antagonistic qualities, but the assumption is gratuitous. I never said that philosophy and poetry were not to be found in the same writer.

Here our discourse was interrupted by the entrance of a female relation of L—'s; she came with a new medicine, for, though he considers himself beyond human aid, he does not affect to despise the

more sanguine hopes of those attached to him. Let them think, said he, that they have done all they could for me: my boat is on the water, it is true, but it would be ill-natured if I did not loiter a little on the strand. It seems to me a singular thing that, among persons about to die, we note so little of that anxious, intense, restless curiosity to know what will await them beyond the grave, which, with me, is powerful enough to conquer regret. Even those the most resigned to God, and the most assured of Revelation, know not, nor can dream, of the *nature* of the life, of the happiness prepared for them. They know not *how* the senses are to be refined and sublimated into the faculties of a Spirit; they know not *how* they shall live, and move, and have their being; they know not whom they shall see, nor what they shall hear; they know not the colour, the capacity of the glories with which they are to be brought face to face. Among the many mansions, which is to be theirs? All this, the matter of grand and of no irreverent conjecture — all this, it seems to me, so natural to revolve — all this I revolve so often, that the conjecture incorporates itself into a passion, and I am impatient to pass the ebon gate, and be lord of the Eternal Secret. Thus, as I approach nearer to death, Nature, and the face of things, assume a more solemn and august aspect. I look upon the leaves, and the grass, and the water, with a sentiment deep, and grave, — and passionate though

scarcely sad. I desire, as I look on those, the ornaments and children of earth, to know, whether, indeed, such things I shall see no more — whether they have no likeness, no archetype in the world in which my future home is to be cast; or whether they have their images above, only wrought in a more wondrous and delightful mould. Whether, in the strange land that knoweth neither season nor labour, there will not be, among all its glories, something familiar. Whether the heart will not recognise a somewhat that it has known, somewhat of "the blessed household tones," somewhat of that which the clay loved and the spirit is reluctant to disavow. Besides, to one who, like us, has made a thirst and a first love of knowledge, what intenseness is there in that peculiar curiosity which relates to the extent of the knowledge we are to acquire! What, after all, is Heaven but a transition, from dim guesses and blind struggling with a mysterious and adverse fate, to the fulness of all wisdom — from ignorance, in a word, to knowledge: but knowledge of what order? Thus even books have, in their speculations, something weird and mystic which, some years ago, my spirit was too encumbered with its frame to recognise: for what of those speculations shall be true — what false? How far has our wisdom gone toward the arcanum of a true morality? how near has some daring and erratic reason approached to the secret of circulating happiness round the world? Shall He,

whom we now contemn as a visionary, be discovered to have been the inspired prophet of our blinded and deafened race; and shall He, whom we now honour as the profound philosopher, be found to have been the vainest of all dreamers, the unsafest of all guides?

A. But to those — and how many are there! — who doubt of the future world itself, this solace of conjecture must be but a very languid exertion of the mind.

L. I grant it. I am not referring to the mere crowd, whether of one faith or another, or of none. I have often pleased myself with recalling an anecdote of Fuseli — an imperfect artist, yet a great genius, whose capacities in this world were only a tithe part developed; in everything of his, in his writings as well as his paintings, you see the unquiet intellect struggling forth with labour and pain, and with only a partial success; and feeling this himself — feeling this contest between the glorious design and the crippled power — I can readily penetrate into his meaning in the reply I am about to repeat. Some coxcomb said to him, "Do you really believe, Mr. Fuseli, that I have a soul?" — "I don't know, sir," said Fuseli, "whether *you* have a soul or not; but, by God! I know that *I* have." And really, were it not for the glorious and all-circling compassion enjoined by our faith, it would be a little difficult to imagine that the soul's inheritance of im-

mortality were equally entailed on all, equally to be claimed by the creature in whom so little of spiritual Essence can be detected that he himself ignores and denies it, and who but fulfils with the brutes the functions necessary to his mere animal existence, — and by the lofty natures with whom the consciousness of soul is constant, and who seem to have nothing human about them but, to use Plato's metaphor, the garments which they wear away. In arriving *at home* — as the Moravian sectarians so endearingly call Heaven — shall I see Plato, and learn if he had ever existed, as he himself imagined, in a brighter world before he descended to this? So bewitching is the study of that divine and most Christian genius, that I have often felt a jealous envy of those commentators who have devoted years to the contemplation of his philosophy. My ambition — had I enjoyed health — would never have suffered me to have become so dreaming a watcher over the lamp in another's tomb: but my imagination would have placed me in an ideal position, which my restlessness forbade me in reality. This activity of habit, yet love of literary indolence — this planning of schemes and conquests in learning, from which one smile from enterprise would decoy me, when scarce begun, made C—— call me, not unaptly, "the most extraordinary reader he ever knew — *in theory*." I see, by-the-by, that you are leaning upon the 'Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury' — will you open the

page in which I have set a mark? We were speaking of the soul, and that page expresses a very beautiful and eloquent, if not very deep sentiment, on the subject. Will you read it?

A. Certainly, — "As in my mother's womb, that formatrix which formed my eyes, ears, and other senses, did not intend them for that dark and noisome place — but, as being conscious of a better life, made them as fitting organs to apprehend and perceive those things which occur in this world, — *so* I believe, since my coming into this world, my soul hath formed or produced certain faculties, which are almost as useless for this life as the above-named senses were for the mother's womb: and these faculties are Hope, Faith, Love, and Joy, since they never rest or fix on any transitory or perishing object in this world — as extending themselves to something farther than can be here given, and, indeed, acquiescing only in the perfect Eternal and Infinite."

L. It is fine — is it not?

A. Yes. It is a proof that the writer *has* felt that vague something which carries us beyond this world. To discover the evidence of that feeling is one of my first tasks in studying a great author. How solemnly it burns through Shakspeare! with what serene and austere grandeur it thrills through the yet diviner Milton! how peculiarly it has stamped itself in the pages of our later poets! But this feel-

ing is rarely perceptible in any of the Continental poets; except, perhaps, the Germans.

L. Ay; Goethe has it. To me there is something very mysterious and spiritual about Goethe's genius — even that homely and plain sense with which, in common with all master-minds, he so often instructs us, and which is especially evident in his 'Memoirs,' is the more effective from some delicate and subtle beauty of sentiment with which it is always certain to be found in juxtaposition.

A. I remember a very delicate observation of his in 'Wilhelm Meister,' a book which had a marked influence upon my own mind; and though the observation may seem commonplace, it is one of a nature very peculiar to Goethe: "When," he remarks, "we have despatched a letter to a friend which does not find him, but is brought back to us, what a singular emotion is produced by breaking open our own seal, and conversing with our altered self as with a third person."

L. There is something ghostlike in the conference; something like a commune with one's wraith.

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A. Of all enthusiasts, the painter Blake seems to have been the most remarkable. With what a hearty faith he believed in his faculty of seeing spirits and conversing with the dead! And what a delightful

vein of madness it was! — with what exquisite verses it inspired him!

L. And what artistic designs! I saw, a few days ago, a copy of the 'Night Thoughts,' which he had illustrated in a manner at once so grotesque, so sublime — now by so literal an interpretation, now by so vague and disconnected a train of invention, that the whole makes one of the most astonishing and curious productions which ever balanced between the conceptions of genius and the chimæras of insanity. I remember two or three of his illustrations, but they are not the most remarkable. To these two fine lines —

"'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past Hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven" —

he has given the illustration of one sitting, and with an earnest countenance conversing with a small, shadowy shape at his knee, while other shapes, of a similar form and aspect, are seen gliding heavenward, each with a scroll in its hands. The effect is very solemn. Again, the line —

"Till Death, that mighty hunter, earths them all," —

is bodied forth by a grim savage with a huge spear, cheering on fiendish and ghastly hounds, one of which has just torn down, and is griping by the throat, an unfortunate fugitive: the face of the hound is unutterably deathlike.

The verse —

"We censure Nature for a span too short," —

obtains an illustration literal enough for ridicule. — A bearded man of gigantic stature is spanning an infant with his finger and thumb. Scarcely less literal, but more impressive, is the illustration of the following lines: —

"When Sense runs savage, broke from Reason's chain,
And sings false peace till smothered by the pall!"

You perceive a young female savage, with long locks, wandering alone, and exulting — while above, two bodiless hands extend a mighty pall, that appears about to fall upon the unconscious rejoicer.

A. Young was fortunate to have his very metaphors illustrated and made corporeal.

L. What wonderful metaphors they are; sometimes trite, familiar, commonplace — sometimes exaggerated and fantastic, but often how ineffably sublime! Milton himself has scarcely surpassed them. But Young is not done justice to, popular as he is with a certain class of readers. He has never yet had a critic to display and make current his most peculiar and emphatic beauties. He is, of all poets, the one to be studied by a man who is about to break the golden chains that bind him to the world — his gloom, then, does not appal nor deject: for it is a gloom that settles on the earth we are about to

leave, and casts not a single shadow over the heaven which it contrasts — the dark river of his solemn genius sweeps the thoughts onward to Eternity. We have no desire even to look behind; the ideas he awakens are, in his own words, "the pioneers of Death;" they make the road broad and clear; they bear down those "arrests and barriers," the Affections; the goal, starred and luminous with glory, is placed full before us; everything else, with which he girds our path, afflicts and saddens. We recoil, we shudder at life; and, as children who in tears and agony at some past peril bound forward to their mother's knee, we hasten, as our comforter and our parent, to the bosom of Death.

CONVERSATION THE SECOND.

L——'s increase of Illness — Remarks on a passage in Bacon — Advantages in the belief of Immortality — An Idea in the last Conversation followed out — A Characteristic of the Sublime — Feelings in one about to die at the Restlessness of Life around.

When I called on L— the third day after the conversation I have attempted to record, though with the imperfect success that must always attend the endeavour to retail dialogue on paper, I found him stretched on his sofa, and evidently much weaker than when I had last seen him. He had suffered the whole night from violent spasms in the chest, and, though now free from pain, was labouring under the exhaustion which follows it. But nothing could wholly conquer in him a certain high-wrought, rather than cheerful, elasticity of mind; and in illness it was more remarkable than in health: for I know not how it was, but in illness his thoughts seemed to stand forth more prominent, to grow more transparent, than they were wont in the ordinary state of the body. He had also of late, until his present malady, fallen into an habitual silence, from which

only at moments he could be aroused. Perhaps now, however, when all his contemplations were bounded to a goal apparently near at hand, and were tinged with the grave (though in him not gloomy) colours common to the thoughts of death — that secret yearning for sympathy — *that desire to communicate* — inherent in man, became the stronger for the short date that seemed allowed for its indulgence. Wishes long hoarded, reflections often and deeply revolved, finding themselves cut off from the distant objects which they had travailed to acquire, seemed wisely to lay down their burden, and arrest their course upon a journey which they were never destined to complete. "I have been reading," said L— (after we had conversed for some minutes about himself), "that divine work on 'The Advancement of Learning.' What English prose-writer ever lifted us from this low earth like Bacon? How shrink before his lofty sentences all the meagre consolation and trite commonplace of lecturers and preachers! — it is, as he has beautifully expressed it, upon no 'waxen wings,' that he urges the mind through the great courses of heaven. He makes us feel less earthly in our desires, by making us imagine ourselves wiser, — the love of a divine knowledge inspires and exalts us. And so nobly has he forced even our ignorance to contribute towards enlarging the soul — towards increasing our longings after immortality — that he never leaves us, like other philosophers, with a sense

of self-littleness and dissatisfaction. With the same hand that limits our progress on earth, he points to the illimitable glories of heaven. Mark how he has done this in the passage I will read to you. As he proceeds in his sublime vindication of Knowledge, 'from the discredits and disgraces it hath received all from ignorance; but ignorance, severally acquired, appearing sometimes in the zeal and jealousy of divines; sometimes in the severity and arrogance of politicians; sometimes in the errors and imperfections of learned men themselves;' — proceeding, I say, in this august and majestical defence, he states the legitimate limits of knowledge, as follows: — 'firstly, that we do not so place our felicity in knowledge as to forget our mortality; secondly, that we make application of our knowledge, to give ourselves repose and contentment, not distaste or repining; thirdly, that we do not presume, by the contemplation of Nature, to attain to the mysteries of God.' After speaking of the two first limits, he comes as follows to the last: — 'And for the third point, it deserveth to be a little stood upon, and not to be lightly passed over; for if any man shall think, by view and inquiry into these sensible and material things, to attain that light whereby he may reveal unto himself the nature or will of God, then indeed is he spoiled by vain philosophy; for the contemplation of God's creatures and works produceth (*having regard to the works and creatures them-*

selves) knowledge; but (*having regard to God*) no perfect knowledge, but wonder, which is broken knowledge. And therefore (note how admirably this image is translated, and how beautifully applied) it was most aptly said by one of Plato's school, 'that the sense of man carrieth a resemblance with the sun, which, as we see, openeth and revealeth all the terrestrial globe; but then again it obscureth the stars and celestial globe: so doth the sense discover natural things, but it darkeneth and shutteth up divine.' Tell me now, and speak frankly, not misled by the antique splendour of the language alone, — tell me whether you do not feel, in the above passages, not humbled by your ignorance, but transported and raised by its very conviction; for, by leaving the mysteries of heaven, and heaven *alone*, unpenetrated by our knowledge, what do we, in reality, but direct the secret and reverent desires of our hearts to that immortal life which shall put the crown upon the great ambition of knowledge, and reveal those mysteries which are shut out from us in this narrow being? Here then there is nothing to lower our imagination, — nothing to chill us in the ardour of our best aspirings, — nothing to disgust us with the bounds of knowledge, or make us recoil upon ourselves with the sense of vanity, of emptiness, of desolation. It is this — the peculiar prerogative of the conviction of our inborn immortality, to take away from us that bitterness at the checks and

arrests of knowledge, of which the wise of all ages have complained, — to give wings to our thoughts at the very moment they are stopped on their earthly course, — to exalt us above ourselves at the moment when self languishes and droops: it is this prerogative, I say, which has always seemed to me among the greatest advantages which a thinking man, who believes in our immortality, has over one who does not so believe. And though, fortunately for mankind, and for all real virtue, the time is rapidly passing away in which we may presume to measure the conduct of others by the proportion in which their opinions resemble our own, yet it must be confessed that he who claims this prerogative has, even here, a grander existence than he who rejects it — in the stimulus to wisdom, and the exalting of the affections, the visions, and the desires! It seems to me as if not only the Form but the Soul of Man was made 'to walk erect, and to look upon the stars.'"

A. — (After some pause.) — Whether or not that it arises from the sentiment, common, however secretly nursed, to the generality of men; the sentiment, that the sublimest sources of emotion and of wisdom remain as yet unknown, there is one very peculiar characteristic in all genius of the highest order; viz. even its loftiest attempts impress us with the feeling, that a vague but glorious "SOMETHING" inspired or exalted the attempt, *and yet remains unexpressed.* The

effect is like that of the spire, which, by insensibly tapering into heaven, owes its pathos and its sublimity to the secret thoughts with which that heaven is associated.

L. Yes; and this, which, you say justly, is the characteristic of the loftiest order of genius, is that token and test of sublimity so especially insisted upon by the ancients, who, perhaps, in consequence of the great scope left by their religion to inquiry, were more impressed with the sentiment we speak of, than is common to the homelier sense, and the satisfied and quiet contemplations, of the moderns. The old scholastic critic* has made it a characteristic of the true sublime, to leave behind it something more to be contemplated than is expressed; and again, Pliny, speaking of painters, observes, I think of Timanthes, "that in his works something more** than was painted was understood, and that, when his art was at the highest, the genius was beyond the art."

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Here we talked for some time on the aspect of

* Longin. sect. 7.

** "In unius hujus operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur; et cum sit ars summa, ingenium tamen ultra artem est."

affairs, the administration, the disturbances in the country.*

L. How strangely falls the sound of tumult on the ear of one who is about to die — how strange doth it seem to behold life so busy and death so near! It is this contrast which, I own, gives me — though I reluctantly acknowledge it — the most mournful feelings that I experience; it gives me a dejection, an envy; my higher and more soaring thoughts desert me; I become sensible only of my weakness, of my want of use, in this world where all are buckling-to their armour, and awaiting an excitement, an enterprise, and a danger. I remember all my old ambition — my former hopes — my energies — my anticipations; I see the great tides of action sweep over me, not even wrestling with death, but feeling it gather and darken upon me, unable to stir or to resist. I could compare myself to some neglected fountain in a ruined city: amidst the crumbling palaces of hope, which have fallen around me, the waters of life ooze away in silence and desolation.

L—'s voice faltered a little as he spoke, and his dog, whether, as I often think, there is in that animal an instinct which lets him know by a look, by a tone of voice, when the object of his wonderful

* Written during the agitation that preceded the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Bill.

fidelity and affection is sad at heart — his dog, an old pointer, that he had cherished for many years, and now was no less his companion in the closet than it had once been in the chase, came up to him and licked his hand. I own this little incident affected me, and the tears rushed into my eyes. But I was yet more softened when I saw L—'s tears were falling fast over the honest countenance of the dog; I knew well what was passing in his mind — no womanly weakness — no repining at death; of all men he had suffered most, and felt most keenly, the neglect and perfidy of friends; and, at that moment he was contrasting a thousand bitter remembrances with the simple affection of that humble companion. I never saw L— *weep* before, though I have seen him in trying afflictions, and though his emotions are so easily excited that he never utters a noble thought, nor reads a touching sentiment in poetry, but you may perceive a moisture in his eyes, and a quiver on his lips.

Our conversation drooped after this, and, though I stayed with him for some hours longer, I do not remember anything else that day worth repeating.

CONVERSATION THE THIRD.

The French Worldly Philosophers — The First Step in Wisdom is to learn to *Think*, no matter how — Thought corrects itself — Brilliant Writers less dangerous than dull ones — Why? — Faults of certain Philosophers — L——, the respectful affection he excites — The Heart turns from Death — Passage in Bolingbroke — Private Life does not afford a vent for all our susceptibilities — A touching Thought in Milton's Latin Poems.

I CALLED on L— the next day; K—, one of the few persons he admits was with him; they were talking on those writers who have directed their philosophy towards matters of the world; who have reduced wisdom into epigrams, and given the goddess of the Grove and the Portico the dress of a lady of fashion. "Never, perhaps," said K—, "did Virtue, despite the assertion of Plato, that we had only to behold in order to adore her, attract so many disciples to wisdom as Wit has done. How many of us have been first incited to reason, have first learned to think, to draw conclusions, to extract a moral from the follies of life, by some dazzling aphorism in Rochefoucauld or La Bruyère! Point, like rhyme, seizes at once the memory and the imagination: for

my own part, I own frankly that I should never have known what it was to reflect — I should never have written on Political Economy — I should never have penetrated into the character of my rogue of a guardian, and saved my fortune by a timely act of prudence — I should never have chosen so good a wife — nay, I should never have been L—'s friend, if I had not, one wet day at Versailles, stumbled upon Rochefoucauld's Maxims: from that moment *I thought*, and I thought very erroneously and very superficially for some time, but the habit of thinking, by degrees, cures the faults of its novitiateship; and I often bless the Maxims of Rochefoucauld as the means which redeemed me from a life of extravagance and debauchery, from the clutches of a rascal, and made me fond of rational pursuits and respectable society. And yet, to say truth, I have no desire to read Rochefoucauld again, and, if I did, I should dissent from his theory."

A. Yes, the faults of a brilliant writer are never dangerous on the long run; a thousand people read his work who would read no other: inquiry is directed to each of his doctrines, it is soon discovered what is true and what is false; the true become starlights, and the false beacons. But your dull writer is little conned, little discussed. Debate, that great winnower of the corn from the chaff, is denied him; the student hears of him as an authority, reads him

without a guide, imbibes his errors, and retails them as a proof of his learning. In a word, the dull writer does not attract to wisdom those indisposed to follow it: and to those who are disposed he bequeaths as good a chance of inheriting a blunder as a truth.

L. I will own to you very frankly that I have one objection to beginning to think, from the thoughts of these worldly inquirers. Notwithstanding Rochefoucauld tells us himself, with so honest a gravity, that he had "*les sentimens beaux*," and that he approved "*extrêmement les belles passions*," his obvious tendency is not to ennoble; he represents the Tragi-comedy of the Great World, but he does not excite us to fill its grand parts; he tells us some of the real motives of men, but he does not tell us also the better motives with which they are entwined. This want of faith in the sublime is what I find, not to blame, but to lament, in most of the authors who have very shrewdly, and with a felicitous and just penetration, unravelled the vices and errors of mankind. I find it in La Bruyère, in Rochefoucauld, even in the more weak and tender Vauvenargues, whose merits have, I think, been so unduly extolled by Dugald Stewart; I find it in Swift, Fielding (admirable moralist as the latter indubitably is in all the lesser branches of morals); and among the ancients, who so remarkable for the same want as the sarcastic and inimitable Lucian?

But let us not judge hastily; this want of nobleness, so to speak, is not necessarily the companion of shrewdness. But mark, where we find the noble and the shrewd united, we acknowledge at once a genius of the very highest order whether in poetry or prose; we acknowledge a Shakspeare, or a Tacitus.

A. Another characteristic of the order of writers we refer to is this — they are too apt to disregard books, and to write from their own experience; now, an experience, based upon some wide and comprehensive theory, is of incalculable value to Truth; but, where that theory is wanting, the experience makes us correct in minute points, but contracted, and therefore in error, on the whole; for error is but a view of few facts instead of a survey of many.

L. In a word, it is with philosophers as with politicians; the experience that guides the individuals must be no rule for the community. And here I remember a fine and just comparison of the Emperor Julian's: speaking of some one who derived knowledge from practice rather than from principle, he compares him to an empiric who, by practice, may cure one or two diseases with which he is familiar; but, having no system or theory of art, must necessarily be ignorant of the innumerable complaints which have not fallen under his personal

observation. Yet now, when a man ventures to speak of a comprehensive and scientific theory, in opposition to some narrow and cramped practice, he who in reality is the physician, is exclaimed against as the quack.

Shortly after this part of our conversation, K— went away, and we talked on some matters connected with L—'s private and household affairs. By degrees, while our commune grew more familiar and confidential, and while the shades of these long winter evenings gathered rapidly over us, as we sat alone by the fire, L— spoke of some incidents in his early history; and I who had always felt a deep interest in even the smallest matter respecting him, and, despite our intimacy, was unacquainted with many particulars of his life, in which I fancied there must be something not unworthy recital, pressed him earnestly to give me a short and frank memoir of his actual and literary life. Indeed, I was anxious that some portion of the world should know as much as may now be known of one who is of no common clay, and who, though he has not numbered many years, and has passed some of those years in the dissipation and pleasure common to men of his birth and wealth, is now, at least, never mentioned by those who know him without a love bordering on enthusiasm, and an esteem more like the veneration we feel for some aged and celebrated philosopher, than the familiar attachment generally en-

tertained for those of our own years and of no public reputation.

"As to my early life," said L—, smiling, in answer to my urgent request, "I feel that it is but an echo of an echo. I do not refuse, however, to tell it you, such as it is; for it may give food to some observations from you more valuable than the events which excite them; and, as to some later epochs in my short career, it will comfort me, even while it wounds, to speak of them. Come to me, then, to-morrow, and I will recall in the mean while what may best merit repeating in the memoir you so inconsiderately ask for. But do not leave me yet, dear A—. Sit down again — let us draw nearer to the fire. — How many scenes have we witnessed in common — how many enterprises have we shared! Let us talk of these, and to-morrow shall come my solitary history: self, self, the eternal self — let us run away from it one day more. Could you but know how forcibly it appears to me, that as life wanes the affections warm! I have observed this in many instances of early death; — early, for in the decay by years the heart outlives all its ties. As the physical parts stiffen, so harden the moral. But in youth, when all the Affections are green within us, they will not willingly perish: they stretch forth their arms, as it were, from their ruined and falling prison-house — they yearn for expansion and release. 'Is it,' as that divine,

though often sullied nature, at once the luminary and the beacon to English statesmen, has somewhere so touchingly asked, 'is it that we grow more tender as the moment of our great separation approaches, or is it that they who are to live together in another state (for friendship exists not but for the good) begin to feel more strongly that divine sympathy which is to be the great bond of their future society?'"*

I could have answered this remark by an allusion to the change in the physical state; the relaxation of illness; the helplessness we feel when sick, and the sense of dependence, the desire to lean somewhere, which the debility of disease occasions. But I had no wish to chill the vein of reasoning to which L—— was inclined; and, after a little pause, he continued: — "For men who have ardent affections, there seems to me no medium between public life and dissatisfaction. In public life those affections find ample channel; they become benevolence, or patriotism, or the spirit of party; or, finally, attaching themselves to things, not persons, concentrate into ambition. But in private life, who, after the first enthusiasm of passion departs, who, possessed of a fervent and tender soul, is ever contented with the return it meets? A word, a glance, chills us; we ask for too keen a sympathy; we ourselves grow

* Bolingbroke's 'Letters to Swift.'

irritable that we find it not — the irritability offends; that is attributed to the temper which in reality is the weakness of the heart — accusation, dispute, coldness succeed. We are flung back upon our own breasts, and so comes one good or one evil — we grow devout or we grow selfish. Denied vent among our fellows, the affections find a refuge in heaven; or they centre in a peevish and lonely contraction of heart, and self-love becomes literally, as the forgotten LEE has expressed it generally,

'The axletree that darts through all the frame.'

This inevitable alternative is more especially to be noted in women; their affections are more acute than ours, so also is their disappointment. It is thus you see the credulous fondness of the devotee, or the fossilised heart of the solitary crone, where, some thirty years back, you would have witnessed a soul running over with love for all things and the yearning to be loved again! Ah! why, why is it that no natures are made wholly alike? why is it that, of all blessings, we long the most for sympathy? and of all blessings it is that which none can say, after the experience of years and the trial of custom, that they have possessed and retained. Milton, whose fate through life was disappointment — disappointment in his private ties and his public attachments — Milton, who has descended to an unthinking posterity as possessing a mind, however elevated, at

least austere and harsh, has, in one of his early Latin poems, expressed this sentiment with a melancholy and soft pathos, not often found in the golden and Platonic richness of his youthful effusions in his own language: —

'Vix sibi quisque parem de millibus invenit unum;
Aut si fors dederit tandem non aspera votis
Illum inopina dies — qua non speraveris hora
Surripit — eternum linquens in sæcula damnum.'*

"And who is there that has not said to himself, if possessed for a short time of one heart, entirely resembling and responding to his own, — who has not said to himself, daily and hourly, '*This* cannot last!' Has he not felt a dim, unacknowledged dread of death? has he not, for the first time, shrunk from penetrating into the future? has he not become timorous and uneasy? is he not like the miser who journeys on a road begirt with a thousand perils, and who yet carries with him his all? Who has not felt the truth of the Poet's reproach to Love?

"Ah! why
With cypress-branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?"

* Thus prosaically translated: —

"Scarce one in thousands meets a kindred heart;
Or, if no harsh fate grant, at last, his dreams,
Swift comes the unforeboded Doom; — and lo,
Leaves to all time the everlasting loss!"

CONVERSATION THE FOURTH.

Containing L——'s History.

In order to make allowance for much of the manner and the matter of L——'s conversation, I must beg the reader to observe how freely he admits his fancy to wander over those regions of inquiry from which fancy would be rigidly excluded by minds more severely disciplined. In excuse for himself he was wont to say, "that the main cause of man's superiority to the brutes, in the distinction between reason and instinct, is in man's irresistible impulse to guess-work — that human reason only accepts a new proof as the starting-point for a new conjecture. Hence, while the most intelligent of the inferior races, from the elephant to the ant, remain stationary, the dullest societies of mankind, if they do but give freedom to guess-work, progressively advance." I am not saying that this notion was sound; I do but say that it was sincerely maintained by a man at the age of twenty-five, who did not live long enough to reject if found false, or uphold, if found true, by maturer experience.

I reminded L——, when I next saw him, of his promise, in our last conversation, to give me a sketch of his early history. I wished it to be the history of his mind as well as his adventures; in a word, a literary and moral, as well as actual narrative, — "A MEMOIR OF A STUDENT." The moment in which I pressed the wish was favourable. He was in better spirits than usual, and free from pain; the evening was fine, and there was that quiet cheerfulness in the air which we sometimes find towards the close of one of those mild days that occasionally relieve the severity of an English winter.

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT.

"You know," said L——, commencing his story, "that I was born to the advantages of an honourable name and of more than a moderate opulence. The care of my education, for I was an orphan, devolved upon my aunt, a maiden lady of some considerable acquirements and some very rare qualities of heart. Good old woman! how well and how kindly I remember her with her high cap and kerchief, the tortoise-shell spectacles, that could not conceal nor injure the gentle expression of her eyes — eyes above which the brow never frowned! How well, too, I remember the spelling-book, and the grammar, and,

as I grew older, the odd volume of Plutarch's 'Lives,' which was placed for my use and profit on the table beside her chair. And something better too, than spelling and grammar, ay, and even the Life of Caius Marius, with that grand and terrible incident in the memoir which Plutarch has so finely told, of how the intended murderer, entering the great Roman's hiding-chamber, as he lay there stricken by years and misfortune, saw through the dim and solemn twilight of the room the eye of the purposed victim fall like a warning light upon him, while a voice exclaimed, 'Darest thou, man, to slay Caius Marius?' and how the stern Gaul, all awe-stricken and amazed, dropped the weapon, and fled from the chamber; better, I say, even than spelling and grammar, and these fine legends of old, were certain homely precepts with which my good aunt was wont to diversify the lecture. Never to tell a lie, never to do a mean action, never to forsake a friend, and never to malign a foe; these were the hereditary maxims of her race, and these she instilled into my mind as things which, if I duly remembered, even the sin of forgetting how to spell words in eight syllables might be reasonably forgiven me.

"I was sent to school when I was somewhere about seven years old, and I remained at that school till I was twelve, and could construe Ovid's Epistles. I was then transplanted to another, better adapted to my increased years and wisdom. Thither I went

with a notable resolution which greatly tended in its consequences to expand my future character. At my first acedemy I had been so often and so bitterly the victim of the exuberant ferocity of the elder boys, that I inly resolved, the moment I was of an age and stature to make any reasonable sort of defence, to anticipate the laws of honour, and never put up, in tranquil endurance, with a blow. When, therefore, I found myself at a new school, and at the age of twelve years, I saw, in my fancy, the epoch of resistance and emancipation, which I had so long coveted. The third day of my arrival I was put to the proof; I was struck by a boy twice my size — I returned the blow — we fought, and I was conquered, but he never struck me again. That was an admirable rule of mine, if a boy has but animal hardihood; for one sound beating he escapes at least twenty lesser ones, with teasings and tormentings indefinitely numerous into the bargain. No boy likes to engage with a boy much less than himself, and rather than do so he will refrain from the pleasure of tyrannising. We cannot, alas! in the present state of the world, learn too early the great wisdom of *Resistance*. I carried this rule, however, a little too far, as you shall hear. I had never been once touched, once even chidden by the master, till one day, when I was about fifteen, we had a desperate quarrel, ending in my expulsion. There was a certain usher in the

school, a very pink and pattern of ushers He was harsh to the lesser boys, but he had his favourites among them — fellows who always called him 'Sir,' and offered him oranges. To us of the higher school he was generally courteous, and it was a part of his policy to get himself invited home by one or the other of us during the holidays. For this purpose he winked at many of our transgressions, allowed us to give feasts on a half-holiday, and said nothing if he discovered a crib* in our possession. But, oh, to the mistress he was Meekness in a human shape. Such humble and sleek modesty never appeared before in a pair of drab inexpressibles and long gaiters. How he praised her pudding on a Sunday! how he extolled her youngest dunce on his entrance into Greek! how delicately he hinted at her still existent charms, when she wore her new silk gown at the parish church! and how subtly he alluded to her gentle influence over the rigid doctor! Somehow or other, between the usher and myself there was a feud; we looked on each other not lovingly; he said I had set the boys against him, and I accused him, in my own heart, of doing me no good service with the fat school-mistress. Things at length came to an open rupture. One evening, after school, the usher was indulging himself, with one of the higher

* The cant word at schools for a literal translation of some classic author.

boys, in the gentle recreation of a game at draughts. Now, after school, the school-room belonged solely and wholly to the boys; it was a wet afternoon, and some half-a-dozen of us entered into a game, not quite so quiet as that which the usher was engaged in. Mr. —— commanded silence; my companions were awed — not so myself; I insisted on our right to be as noisy as we would out of school. My eloquence convinced them, and we renewed the game. The usher again commanded silence; we affected not to hear him. He rose; he saw me in the act of rebellion.

"'Mr. L—,' cried he, 'do you hear me, sir? Silence!'

"'I beg your pardon, sir; but we have a right to the school-room after hours; especially of a wet evening.'

"'Oh! very well, sir; very well; I shall report you to the Doctor.' So saying, the usher buttoned up his nether garment, which he had a curious custom of unbracing after school, — especially when engaged in draughts, and went forthwith to the master. I continued the game. The master entered. He was a tall, gaunt, lame man, very dark in hue, and very stern of aspect, with a cast in his eye.

"'How is this, Mr. L—?' said he, walking up to me; 'how dared you disobey Mr. —'s orders?'

"'Sir, his orders were against the custom of the school.'

"'Custom, sir! and who gives custom to this

school but myself? You are insolent, Mr. L—, and you don't know what is due to your superiors.'

"'Superiors!' said I, with a look at the usher. The master thought I spoke of himself; his choler rose, and he gave me a box on the ear.

"All my blood was up in a moment; never yet, under that roof, had I received a blow unavenged on the spot. I had fought my way in the school, step by step, to the first ranks of pugilistic heroism. Boys taller and more peaceable than myself hated me, but attacked not; these were now around me exulting in my mortification; I saw them nudge each other with insolent satisfaction. The master had never before struck a boy in my class. The insult was tenfold, because unparalleled. All these thoughts flashed across me. I gathered myself up, clenched my fist, and, with a sudden and almost unconscious effort, I returned, and in no gentle manner, the blow I had received. The pedagogue could have crushed me on the spot; he was a remarkably powerful man. I honour him at this moment for his forbearance; at that moment I despised him for his cowardice. He looked thunderstruck, after he had received so audacious a proof of my contumacy; the blood left, and then gushed burningly back to, his sallow cheek. 'It is well, sir,' said he, at length; 'follow me!' and he walked straight out of the school-room. I obeyed with a mechanical and dogged sullenness. He led the way into the house, which was detached from

the school-room; entered a little dingy front parlour, in which only once before (the eve of my first appearance under his roof) had I ever set foot; motioned me also within the apartment; gave me one stern, contemptuous look; turned on his heel; left the room; locked the door, and I was alone. At night the maid-servants came in, and made up a bed on a little black horsehair sofa. There was I left to repose. The next morning came at last. My breakfast was brought to me in a mysterious silence. I began to be affected by the monotony and dulness of my seclusion. I looked carefully round the little chamber for a book, and at length, behind a red tea-tray, I found one. It was — I remember it well — it was Beloe's 'Sexagenarian.' I have never looked into the book since, but it made considerable impression on me at the time — a dull, melancholy impression, like that produced on us by a rainy, drizzling day; there seemed to me then a stagnant quiet, a heavy repose about the memoir, which saddened me with the idea of a man writing the biography of a life never enjoyed, and wholly unconscious that it had not been enjoyed to the utmost. It is very likely that this impression is not a just one, and, were I to read the book again, it might create very different sensations. But I recollect that I said, at some passage or another, with considerable fervour, 'Well, I will never devote existence to becoming a scholar.' I had not finished the book,

when the schoolmistress entered, as if looking for a bunch of keys, but in reality to see how I was employed; a very angry glance did she cast upon my poor amusement with the 'Sexagenarian,' and, about two minutes after she left the room, a servant entered and demanded the book. The perusal of the 'Sexagenarian' remains yet unconcluded, and most probably will so remain to my dying day. A gloomy evening and a sleepless night succeeded; but early next morning a ring was heard at the gate, and from the window of my dungeon I saw the servant open the gate, and my aunt walk up the little straight riband of gravel that intersected what was termed the front garden. In about half an hour afterwards the Doctor entered with my poor relation, the latter in tears. The Doctor had declared himself inexorable; nothing less than my expulsion would atone for my crime. Now my aunt was appalled by the word expulsion; she had heard of boys to whom expulsion had been ruin for life; on whom it had shut the gates of college, the advantages of connexion, the fold of the Church, the honours of civil professions; it was a sound full of omen and doom to her ear. She struggled against what she deemed so lasting a disgrace. I remained in the dignity of silence, struck to the heart by her grief and reproaches, but resolved to show no token of remorse.

"'Look, ma'am,' cried the Doctor, irritated by my obstinacy; 'look at the young gentleman's coun-

tenance: do you see repentance there?' My aunt looked, and I walked to the window to hide my face. This finished the business, and I returned home that day with my aunt; who saw in me a future outcast, and a man undone for life, from the want of a proper facility in bearing boxes on the ear.

"Within a week from that time I was in the house of a gentleman, who professed not to keep a school, but to take pupils, — a nice distinction, which separates the schoolmaster from the tutor. There were about six of us, from the age of fifteen to eighteen. Our tutor undertook to prepare us for the University, and with him, in real earnest, I, for the first time, began *to learn*. Yes; there, commenced an epoch both in my mind and heart, — I woke to the knowledge of books and also of myself. In one year I passed over a world of feelings. From the child I rose at once into the man. But let me tell my story methodically; and first, as to the education of the intellect. Mr. S— was an elegant and graceful scholar, of the orthodox University *calibre*, not deeply learned, but intimately acquainted with the beauties and the subtleties of the authors he had read. You know, A—, what authors an University scholar does read, and those whom he neglects. At this time it is with those most generally neglected that I am least imperfectly acquainted; but it was not so then, as you may suppose. Before I went to

Mr. S—'s I certainly had never betrayed any very studious disposition; the ordinary and hackneyed method of construing, and parsing, and learning by heart, and making themes, of which the only possible excellence was to be unoriginal; — all this had disgusted me betimes, and I shirked lessons with the same avidity as the rest of my tribe. It became suddenly different with Mr. S—. The first day of my arrival, I took up the 'Medea' of Euripides. Into what a delightful recreation did S— convert the task I had hitherto thought so wearisome, — how eloquently he dwelt on each poetical expression, — how richly he illustrated every beauty by comparisons and contrasts from the pages of other poets! What a life he breathed into the dull lecture! How glowingly, as if touched by a wand, were the Greek crabbed sentences, hitherto breathing but of lexicons and grammars, exalted into the freshness and the glory of the poet! Euripides was the first of the divine spirits of old who taught me those forms of truth which are never visible except in fiction; and so great and deep is my gratitude, that at this day I read his plays more often than I do even those of Shakspeare, and imagine that beauties speak to me from that little obsolete edition, in which I then read him, which are dumb to every heart but my own. I now studied with a new frame of mind: first, I began to admire — then to dwell upon what I admired — then to criticise, or some-

times to imitate. Within two years I had read, nor inattentively, the works of almost all the ancient poets, historians, orators. The Greek philosophers remained out of my reach. S— did not undertake to expound Plato, and the only work of Aristotle which he ventured to commend to our study was that Treatise upon Poetry, which, confining poetry almost exclusively to the Tragic Drama, lays down rules that an English schoolboy, fresh from Shakspeare, thinks himself privileged to despise.

"I had been little more than a year with S— when one bright morning of June I felt as if a strong spirit had passed into my soul teaching me to view Nature through a new medium, and bidding me seek some new form of language for thoughts so sweet that they seemed to reject all utterance not akin to music. For the first time I yearned for the gift of poetry, because for the first time I felt the inspiration of love.

"There was a slender, but pleasant brook, about two miles from S—'s house, to which one or two of us were accustomed, in the summer days, to repair to bathe and saunter away our leisure hours. To this favourite spot I one day went alone, and, crossing a field which led to the brook, I encountered two ladies, with one of whom, having met her at some house in the neighbourhood, I had a slight acquaintance. We stopped to speak to each other, and I saw the face of her companion. Alas! were I to

live ten thousand lives, there would never be a moment in which I could be alone — nor sleeping, and that face not with me!

"My acquaintance introduced us to each other. I walked home with them to the house of Miss D— (so was the strange, who was also the younger, lady named). The next day I called upon her. The acquaintance thus commenced did not droop; and, notwithstanding our youth — for Lucy D— was only seventeen, and I nearly a year younger — we soon loved, and with a love, which, however childlike in its pure romance, was as strong, as true, as fatal as ever ruled the heart of man or influenced the life of woman.

"Ah! how little did I think of what our young folly entailed upon us! We basked in the sunshine of the moment, and foreboded no cloud in the future. Neither of us had any ulterior design; we did not think — poor children that we were — of marriage, and settlements, and consent of relations. We touched each other's hands, and were happy; we read poetry together — and when we lifted our eyes from the page, those eyes met, and we did not know why our hearts beat so violently; and at length, when we spoke of love; when we described all that we thought in absence — and all we had felt when present — when we sat with our hands locked each in each — and at last, growing bolder, when in the still and quiet loneliness of a summer twilight we

exchanged our first kiss, we did not dream that the world forbade what seemed to us so natural; nor — feeling in our own hearts the impossibility of change — did we ever ask whether this sweet and mystic state of existence was to last for ever!

"Lucy was an only child; her father, though well-born, was a man of attainted character. A profligate, a gambler — ruined alike in fortune, hope, and reputation, he was yet her only guardian and protector. The village in which we both resided was near London; there Mr. D—— had a small cottage, where he left his daughter and his slender establishment for days, and sometimes for weeks together, while he was engaged in equivocal speculations — giving no address, and engaged in no professional mode of life. Lucy's mother had died long since, of a broken heart — so that this poor girl was literally without a monitor or a friend, save her own innocence — and, alas! innocence is but a poor substitute for experience. The lady with whom I had met her had known her mother, and she felt compassion for the child. She saw her constantly, and sometimes took her to her own house, whenever she was in the neighbourhood; but that was not often, and only for a few days at a time. Her excepted, Lucy had no female friend.

"Was it a wonder, then, that she allowed herself to meet me? — that we spent hours and hours together? — that she called me her only friend — her

brother as well as her lover? There was a peculiarity in our attachment worth noticing. Never, from the first hour of our meeting to the last of our separation, did we ever say an unkind or cutting word to each other. Living so much alone — never meeting in the world — unacquainted with all the tricks, and doubts, and artifices of life, we never had cause for the suspicion, the jealousy, the reproach, which disturb the current of loves formed in society; the kindest language, the most tender thoughts, alone occurred to us. If anything prevented her meeting me, she never concealed her sorrow, nor did I ever affect to chide. We knew from the bottom of our hearts that we were all in all to each other — and there was never any disguise to the clear and full understanding of that delicious knowledge. Poor — poor Lucy! what an age seems to have passed since then! How dim and melancholy, yet, oh! how faithful, are the hues in which that remembrance is clothed! When I muse over that time, I start, and ask myself if it was real, or if I did not wholly dream it — and, with the intenseness of the dream, fancy it a truth. Many other passages in my life have been romantic, and many, too, coloured by the affections. But this brief period of my existence is divided utterly from the rest — it seems to have no connexion with all else that I have felt and acted — a strange and visionary wandering out of the living world — having here no being and no parallel.

"One evening we were to meet at a sequestered and lonely part of the brook's course, a spot which was our usual rendezvous. I waited considerably beyond the time appointed, and was just going sorrowfully away, when she appeared. As she approached, I saw that she was in tears — and for several moments she could not speak for weeping. At length I learned that her father had just returned home, after a long absence — that he had announced his intention of immediately quitting their present home and going to a distant part of the country, or perhaps even abroad.

"And this chance, so probable, so certain — this chance of separation had never occurred to us before! We had lived in the Happy Valley, nor thought of the strange and desert lands that stretched beyond the mountains around us! I felt while I listened to her as if I had suffered some blow which suspended my reason and annulled my very consciousness of life. I did not speak, nor attempt, for several moments, to console her. At length we sat down under an old holm-tree, and Lucy it was who spoke first. I cannot say whether Lucy was beautiful or not, nor will I attempt to describe her. Methinks it were profane to allow my thoughts wilfully to call back and reclothe in the form of mortal her whom in my dreams I see only as the angel. But putting her outward attractions wholly aside, there was something in Lucy's sweet and kind voice which

would have filled me with love even for deformity; and now, when quite forgetting herself, she thought only of comfort and hope for me, my love to her seemed to grow and expand, and leave within me no thought, no feeling, that it did not seize and colour. It is a strange thing in the history of the human heart, that the times most sad to experience are often the most grateful to recall; and of all the passages in our brief and chequered love, none have I clung to so fondly, nor cherished so tenderly, as the remembrance of that desolate and tearful hour. We walked slowly home, speaking very little, and lingering on the way — and my arm was round her waist all the time. Had we fixed any scheme — formed any plan for hope? — none! We felt ourselves as playthings in the hands of Fate. There was a little stile at the entrance of the garden round Lucy's home, and, sheltered as it was by trees and bushes, it was there, whenever we met, that we took our last adieu — and there that evening we stopped, and lingered over our parting words and our parting kiss — and at length, when I tore myself away, I looked back and saw her in the sad and grey light of the evening still there, still watching, still weeping! What after-hours of anguish and gnawing of heart must one, who loved so kindly and so entirely, have endured!

"As I lay awake that night, I formed the resolve which would have occurred at once to any lover

equally honest but less inexperienced in life. I would seek Lucy's father, communicate our attachment, and sue for his approbation. We might, indeed, be too young for marriage — but we could wait and love each other in the mean while. I lost no time in following up this resolution. The next day, before noon, I was at the door of Lucy's cottage — I was in the little chamber that faced the garden, alone with her father.

"A boy forms strange notions of a man who is considered a scoundrel. I was prepared to see one of fierce and sullen appearance, and to meet with a rude and coarse reception. I found in Mr. D—— a person who, early accustomed to polished society, still preserved, in his manner and appearance, its best characteristics. His voice was soft and bland; his face, though haggard and worn, retained the traces of early beauty; and a courteous and attentive ease of deportment had been probably improved rather than impaired by the habit of deceiving others. I told our story to this man, frankly and fully. When I had done, he rose; he took me by the hand; he expressed some regret, yet some satisfaction, at what he had heard. He was sensible how much peculiar circumstances had obliged him to leave his daughter unprotected; he was sensible, also, that, from my birth and future fortunes, my affection did honour to the object of my choice. Nothing would have made him so happy, so proud,

had I been older — had I been my own master. But I and he, alas! must be aware that my friends and guardians would never consent to my forming any engagement at so premature an age, and they and others would impute the blame to him; for calumny (he added in a melancholy tone) had been busy with his name, and any story, however false or idle, would be believed of one who was out of favour with the world.

"All this, and much more, did he say; and I pitied him while he spoke. Our conference then ended in nothing fixed; but he asked me to dine with him the next day. In a word, while he forbade me at present to recur to the subject, he allowed me to see his daughter as often as I pleased: this lasted for about ten days. At the end of that time, when I made my usual morning visit, I saw D—— alone; he appeared much agitated. He was about, he said, to be arrested. He was undone for ever — and his poor daughter! — he could say no more — his manly heart was overcome, and he hid his face with his hands. I attempted to console him, and inquired the sum necessary to relieve him. It was considerable; and on hearing it named, I at once deemed myself without the power of assisting him. I was mistaken. But why dwell on so hackneyed a topic, as the skill of a sharper on the one hand, and the credulity of a dupe on the other? I saw a gentleman of the tribe of Israel — I raised a sum of

money, to be repaid when I came of age, and that sum was placed in D——'s hands. My intercourse with Lucy continued: but not long. This matter came to the ears of one who had succeeded my poor aunt, now no more, as my guardian. He saw D——, and threatened him with penalties, which the sharper did not dare to brave. My guardian was a man of the world; he said nothing to me on the subject, but he begged me to accompany him on a short tour through a neighbouring county. I took leave of Lucy only for a few days as I imagined. I accompanied my guardian — was a week absent — returned — and hastened to the cottage: it was shut up — an old woman opened the door — they were gone, father and daughter, none knew whither!

"It was now that my guardian disclosed his share in this event, so terribly unexpected by me. He unfolded the arts of D——; he held up his character in its true light. I listened to him patiently, while he proceeded thus far; but when, encouraged by my silence, he attempted to insinuate that Lucy was implicated in her father's artifices — that she had lent herself to decoy, to the mutual advantange of sire and daughter, the inexperienced heir of considerable fortunes — my rage and indignation exploded at once. High words ensued. I defied his authority — I laughed at his menaces — I openly declared my resolution of tracing Lucy to

the end of the world, and marrying her the instant she was found. Whether or not my guardian had penetrated sufficiently into my character to see that force was not the means by which I was to be guided, I cannot say; but he softened from his tone at last — apologised for his warmth — condescended to soothe and remonstrate — and our dispute ended in a compromise. I consented to leave Mr. S——, and to spend the next year, preparatory to my going to the university, with my guardian: he promised, on the other hand, that if, at the end of that year, I still wished to discover Lucy, he would throw no obstacles in the way of my search. I was ill contented with this compact; but I was induced to it by my firm persuasion that Lucy would write to me, and that we should console each other, at least, by a knowledge of our mutual situation and our mutual constancy. In this persuasion I insisted on remaining six weeks longer with S——, and gained my point; and that any letter Lucy might write might not be exposed to officious intervention from S—— or my guardian's satellites, I walked every day to meet the postman who was accustomed to bring our letters. None came from Lucy. Afterwards I learned that D——, whom my guardian had wisely bought, as well as intimidated, had intercepted three letters which she had addressed to me in her unsuspecting confidence — and that she only ceased to write when she ceased to believe in me.

"I went to reside with my guardian: a man of a hospitable and liberal turn, his house was always full of guests, who were culled from the most agreeable circles in London. We lived in a perpetual round of amusement; and my guardian, who thought I should be rich enough to afford to be ignorant, was more anxious that I should divert my mind than instruct it. Well, this year passed slowly and sadly away, in spite of the gaiety around me; and, at the end of that time, I left my uncle to go to the university; but I first lingered in London to make inquiries after D——. I could learn no certain tidings of him, but heard that the most probable place to find him was a certain gaming-house in K—— Street. Thither I repaired forthwith. It was a haunt of no delicate and luxurious order of vice; the chain attached to the threshold indicated suspicion of the spies of justice; and a grim and sullen face peered jealously upon me before I was suffered to ascend the shabby and darksome staircase: but my search was destined to a brief end. At the head of the *Rouge et Noir* table, facing my eyes the moment I entered the evil chamber, was the marked and working countenance of D——.

"He did not look up — no, not once, all the time he played: he won largely — rose with a flushed face and trembling hand — descended the stairs — stopped in a room below, where a table was spread with meats and wine — took a large

tumbler of madeira, and left the house. I had waited patiently — I had followed him with a noiseless step — I now drew my breath hard, clenched my hands, as if to nerve myself for a contest, and as he paused for a moment under one of the lamps, seemingly in doubt whither to go, I laid my hand on his shoulder, and uttered his name. His eyes wandered with a leaden and dull gaze over my face before he remembered me. *Then* he recovered his usual bland smile and soft tone. He grasped my unwilling hand, and inquired with the tenderness of a parent after my health. I did not heed his words. 'Your daughter?' said I, convulsively.

"'Ah! you were old friends,' quoth he, smiling; 'you have recovered that folly, I hope. Poor thing! she will be happy to see an old friend. You know, of course ——'

"'What?' for he hesitated.

"'That Lucy is married!'

"'Married!' and as that word left my lips, it seemed as if my very life, my very soul, had gushed forth also in the sound. When — oh! when, in the night-watch and the daily yearning, — when, whatever might have been my grief, or wretchedness, or despondency, — when had I dreamed of a doom like this? Married! my Lucy, my fond, my constant, my pure-hearted, and tender Lucy! Suddenly all the chilled and revolted energies of my passions seemed to react, and rush back upon me. I seized

that smiling wretch with a fierce grasp. 'You have done this — you have broken her heart — you have crushed mine! I curse you in her name and my own! Wretch! wretch!' and he was as a reed in my hands.

"'Madman!' said he, as at last he extricated himself from my gripe, 'my daughter married with her free consent, married one far better fitted to make her happy than you. Go, go — I forgive you — I also was once in love, and with *her* mother!'

"I did not answer — I let him depart.

"Behold me, now, then, entered upon a new stage of life: a long, sweet, shadowy train of dreams and fancies, and forethoughts of an unreal future, was for ever passed. I had attained suddenly to the end of that period which is as a tale from the East, 'a tale of glory and of the sun.' A startling and abrupt truth had come upon me in the night, and unawares! I was awakened, and for ever — the charm had fallen from me, and I was as other men! The little objects of earth — the real and daily present — the routine of trifles — the bustle and the contest — the poor employment and the low ambition — these were henceforth to me as to my fellow-kind. I was brought at once into the actual world; and the armour for defence was girded round me as by magic; the weapon adapted to the hardship and to the battle was in my hand. And all this had hap-

pened — love — disappointment — despair — wisdom — while I was yet a boy!

"It was a little while after this interview — but I mention it now, for there is no importance in the quarter from which I heard the tale — that I learned some few particulars of Lucy's marriage. There was, and still is, in the world's gossip, a strange story of a rich, foolish man, awed as well as gulled by a sharper, and of a girl torn to a church with such evidence of constraint and terror that the clergyman refused to perform the ceremony. It was afterwards solemnized in a private chapel by special licence. The pith of that story has truth, and Lucy was at once the heroine and victim of the romance. Now, then, I turn to a somewhat different strain in my narrative.

"You, A——, who know so well the habits of a university life, need not be told how singularly monotonous and contemplative it may be made to a lonely man. The first year I was there, I mixed, as you may remember, in none of the many circles into which that curious and motley society is split. I formed, or rather returned to, my passion for study; yet the study was desultory, and wanted that system and vigour on which, at a later time, you have complimented my literary ardour. Two or three books, of a vague and unmellowed philosophy, fell in my way, and I fed upon their crude theories. We live alone, and we form a system; we go into the world,

and we see the errors in the systems of others. To judge and to invent are two opposite faculties, and are cultivated by two opposite modes of life; or, as Gibbon has expressed it, 'Conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius.'

"My only recreation was in long and companionless rides; and in the flat and dreary country around our university, the cheerless aspect of nature fed the idle melancholy at my heart. In the second year of my college life I roused myself a little from my seclusion; and rather by accident than design, you will remember that my acquaintances were formed among men considered the most able and promising of our time. I appeared but to poor advantage among those young academicians, fresh as they were from public schools; their high animal spirits for ever on the wing; — ready in wit and in argument — prone now to laugh at trifles, and now earnestly to dispute on them — they stunned and confused my quiet and grave habits of mind. I have met the most brilliant of these men since, and they have frankly confessed themselves astonished, even at the little and meagre reputation I have acquired, and at whatsoever conversational ability, though only by fits and starts, I may now display. They compliment me on my improvement: they mistake — my intellect is just the same — I have improved only in the facility of communicating its fruits. In

the summer of that year I resolved to make a bold effort to harden my mind and conquer its fastidious reserve; and I set out to travel over the north of England, and the greater part of Scotland, in the humble character of a pedestrian tourist. Nothing ever did my character more solid good than that experiment. I was thrown among a thousand varieties of character; I was continually forced into bustle and action, and into *providing for myself* — that great and indelible lesson towards permanent independence of character.

"One evening, in an obscure part of Cumberland, I was seeking a short cut to a neighbouring village through a gentleman's grounds, in which there was a public path. Just within sight of the house (which was an old, desolate building, in the architecture of James the First, with gable-ends and dingy walls, and deep-sunk, gloomy windows), I perceived two ladies at a little distance before me; one seemed in weak and delicate health, for she walked slowly and with pain, and stopped often as she leaned on her companion. I lingered behind, in order not to pass them abruptly; presently they turned away towards the house, and I saw them no more. Yet that frail and bending form, as I too soon afterwards learned — that form, which I did not recognise — which, by a sort of fatality, I saw only in a glimpse, and yet for the last time on earth, — that form was the wreck of Lucy D——!

"Unconscious of this event in my destiny, I left that neighbourhood and settled for some weeks on the borders of the lake of Keswick. There, one evening, a letter, redirected from London, reached me. The handwriting was that of Lucy; but the trembling and slurred characters, so different from that graceful ease which was wont to characterise all she did, filled me, even at the first glance, with alarm. This is the letter — read it; you will know, then, what I have lost.

"'I write to you, my dear, my unforgotten ****, the last letter this hand will ever trace. Till now, it would have been a crime to write to you; perhaps it is so still — but dying as I am, and divorced from all earthly thoughts, and remembrances, save yours, I feel that I cannot quite collect my mind for the last hour until I have given you the blessing of one whom you loved once; and when that blessing is given, I think I can turn away from your image, and sever willingly the last tie that binds me to earth. I will not afflict you by saying what I have suffered since we parted — with what anguish I thought of what *you* would feel when you found me gone — and with what cruel, what fearful violence, I was forced into becoming the wretch I now am. I was hurried, I was driven, into a dreadful and bitter duty — but I thank God that I have fulfilled it. What, what have I done, to have been made so miserable through-

out life as I have been! I ask my heart, and tax my conscience, and every night I think over the sins of the day; they do not seem to me heavy, yet my penance has been very great. For the two last years I do sincerely think that there has not been one day which I have not marked with tears. But enough of this, and of myself. You, dear, dear L—, let me turn to you! Something at my heart tells me that you have not forgotten that once we were the world to each other, and even through the changes and the glories of a man's life I think you will not forget it. True, that I was a poor and friendless, and not too-well educated girl, and altogether unworthy of your destiny; but you did not think so then — and when you have lost me, it is a sad, but it is a real comfort, to feel that that thought will never occur to you. Your memory will invest me with a thousand attractions and graces I did not possess, and all that you recall of me will be linked with the freshest and happiest thoughts of that period of life in which you first beheld me. And this thought, dearest ****, sweetens death to me — and sometimes it comforts me for what has been. Had our lot been otherwise — had we been united, and had you survived your love for me (and what more probable!), my lot would have been darker even than it has been. I know not how it is — perhaps from my approaching death — but I seem to have grown old, and to have obtained the right to

be your monitor and warner. Forgive me, then, if I implore you to think earnestly and deeply of the great ends of life; think of them as one might think who is anxious to gain a distant home, and who will not be diverted from his way. Oh! could you know how solemn and thrilling a joy comes over me as I nurse the belief, the certainty, that we shall meet at length, and for ever! Will not that hope also animate you, and guide you unerring through the danger and the evil of this entangled life?

"'May God bless you, and watch over you — may He comfort, and cheer, and elevate your heart to Him! Before you receive this I shall be no more; but my love, my care for you will, I trust and feel, have become eternal. Farewell.

'L. M.'

"The letter," continued L—, struggling with his emotions, "was dated from that village through which I had so lately passed; thither I repaired that very night — Lucy had been buried the day before! I stood upon a green mound, and a few, few feet below it, separated from me by a scanty portion of earth, mouldered that heart which had loved me so faithfully and so well!

"What a difference throughout the whole of this various and teeming earth a single DEATH can effect! Sky, sun, air, the eloquent waters, the inspiring

mountain-tops, the murmuring and glossy woods, the very

'Glory in the grass, and splendour in flower,' —

do these hold over us an eternal spell? Are they as a part and property of an unvarying course of nature? Have they aught which is unfailing, steady — *same* in its effect? One gap, invisible to all but ourself, in the crowd and turmoil of the world, and everything is changed. In a single hour, the whole process of thought, the whole ebb and flow of emotion, may be revulsed for the rest of an existence. Nothing can ever seem to us as it did: it is a blow upon the fine mechanism by which we think, and move, and have our being — the pendulum vibrates aright no more — the dial hath no account with time — the process goes on, but it knows no symmetry nor order; it was a single stroke that marred it, but the harmony is gone for ever!

"And yet I often think that that shock which jars on the *mental*, renders yet softer the *spiritual* nature. A death that is connected with love unites us by a thousand remembrances to all who have mourned: it builds a bridge between the young and the old; it gives them in common the most touching of human sympathies; it steals from nature its glory and its exhilaration, but not its tenderness. And what, perhaps, is better than all, to mourn deeply for the death of another, loosens from ourself the petty desire

for, and the animal adherence to, life. We have gained the end of the philosopher, and view, without shrinking, the coffin and the pall.

"For a year my mind did not return to its former pursuits: my scholastic ambition was checked at once. Hitherto I had said, 'If I gain distinction *she* will know it:' *now* that object was no more. I could not even bear the sight of books: my thoughts had all curdled into torpor — a melancholy listlessness filled and oppressed me; the day chasing day without end or profit — the cloud sweeping after cloud over the barren plain — the breath after breath passing across the unmoved mirror — these were the sole types and images of my life. I had been expected by my friends to attain some of the highest of academical rewards; you may imagine that I deceived their expectations. I left the university, and hastened to London. I was just of age. I found myself courted, and I plunged eagerly into society. The experiment was perilous; but in my case it answered. I left myself no time for thought: gambling, intrigue, dissipation, these are the occupations of polished society; they are great resources to a wealthy mourner. The 'man' stirred again within me; the weakness of my repinings gradually melted away beneath the daily trifles of life; perpetual footsteps, though the footsteps of idlers, wore the inscription from the stone. I said to my heart, 'Why mourn when mourning is but vanity, and to regret is only to be weak? — Let

me turn to what life has left, let me struggle to enjoy.'

"At first I was ill at ease in feigning attention to frivolities; by degrees frivolities grew into importance. Society, like the stage, gives rewards intoxicating in proportion as they are immediate: the man who has but to appear behind the lamps of the orchestra to be applauded, must find all other species of fame distant and insipid. So with society, the wit and the gallant can seldom covet praise, which, if more lasting, is less *present* than that which they command by a word and a glance. And having once tasted the *éclat* of social power, they cannot resist the struggle to preserve it. This, then, grew my case, and it did me good, though it has done others evil, I lived my summer day, — laughed, and loved, and trifled with the herd. The objects pursued were petty, it is true; but to have *any* object was to reconcile myself to life. And now the London season was over: summer was upon us in all its later prodigality. I was no longer mournful, but I was wearied. Ambition, as I lived with the world, again dawned upon me. I said, when I saw the distinction that mediocrity acquired, 'Why content myself with satirising the claim? — why not struggle against the claimant?' In a word, I again thirsted for knowledge and coveted its power. Now comes the main history of *the Student;* — but I have fatigued you enough for the present."

CONVERSATION THE FIFTH.

The History of L—— continued in his Intellectual Pursuits — Helvetius — His faults and merits — The Materialists — The Philosophy of Faith.

"It was observed by Descartes," said L— (as, a day or two after our last conversation, we renewed the theme we had then begun), "'that in order to improve the mind, we ought less to learn than to contemplate.' In this sentence lies the use of retirement. There are certain moments when study is peculiarly grateful to us: but in no season are we so likely to profit by it, as when we take a voluntary breathing-time from the noise and hubbub of the world. Behold me, then, within a long day's journey from London, in a beautiful country, an old house, and a library collected with great labour by one of my forefathers, and augmented in more modern works by myself.

"The first branch of letters to which I directed my application was Moral Philosophy; and the first book I seized upon was Helvetius. I know no work so fascinating to a young thinker as the 'Discours de l'Esprit:' the variety, the anecdote, the illustration, the graceful criticism, the solemn adjuration,

the brilliant point that characterise the work, and render it so attractive, less as a treatise than as a composition, would alone make that writer delightful to many who mistake the end of his system, and are incapable of judging its wisdom in parts.

"His great metaphysical error is in supposing all men born with the same capacity; in resolving all effects of character and genius to education. For, in the first place, the weight of proof being thrown upon him, he does not prove the fact; and, secondly, if he did prove it, neither we nor his system would be a whit the better for it: for the utmost human and possible care in education cannot make all men alike. Yet even this dogma, if unsound in itself, has served to make clearer a truth important to the conversation and to the progress of social communities. For the dispute it occasioned compelled men to acknowledge how largely national character is formed by ideas derived from specialities in the national culture. Let me illustrate my meaning. Take any of the small commonwealths closely bordering on each other in a region so comparatively limited as ancient Greece: the Athenian differs from the Corinthian, the Corinthian from the Ætolian, the Ætolian from the Spartan: and though the difference may have originated in ancestral variations of clan or tribe rather than of race, still more in variation of locality and circumstances, yet the main cause, to which these lesser one conspire, is clearly to be

traced to different habits of mind engendered by different modes of education — meaning by the word education whatever discipline or nurture tends to form the ideas which constitute the mind of a man out of the capacity to receive ideas which the Maker has bestowed on the organization of a child. And where all these petty commonwealths take a character in common as Greeks, it is only where they are united by such principles of culture as they all agree in adopting — especially those that belong to religious worship and belief — for there is nothing which so amalgamates political societies as sympathy in religious opinions. Assuming these propositions to be true, it follows that, though no education can render individuals alike, yet a family likeness, as it were, is given to communities by the nature of their culture; and the idiosyncrasy of a nation is formed by the ideas which the beings who compose it have most in common. But the ideas which the members of a community have most in common are, obviously, the ideas derived from their political and social institutions. Hence it is a merit in Helvetius that, more distinctly than any modern political reasoner before him, he defines the virtue of an individual "to be the habit of directing his actions to the public good;" "the love of virtue," he says, "is but the desire of the general happiness; virtuous actions are those which contribute to that happiness." And upon this definition he builds his argument for those forms of

government in which the largest number of men may be raised to the highest moral standard.

A. I think his idea of a perfect state is that in which the self-interest of each man is made to advance the interest of all men — do you believe in the possibility of establishing so uniform a general motive-power for the desires and actions of individual ambition?

L. Not to the extent to which Helvetius pushes his enthusiasm for his system; but there can be no doubt that the desires and aims of individuals are materially influenced by the opinion of the society in which they live. And in proportion as that society honours or neglects a virtue, that virtue will be cultivated as a thing in fashion, or passed by as a thing out of date. Thus, in the early youth of a warlike people, the competition is for renown in valour; in the maturity or decline of a commercial state the competition will be for wealth, or the reputation accorded to those directions of intellect by which wealth may be obtained. Now, in each state the individual self-interest follows the public opinion as to the interest of the community. The young warlike state thinks its chief interest as a body politic is in the enforcement of valour — the mature commercial state thinks its chief interest is in the accumulation of wealth. Hence, it is clear that the ambition of individuals is, for their own interest, insensibly led towards the advancement of that to which the

community for the time being accords honour and esteem for the sake of its own interest. Helvetius argued that, in proportion as a whole community can be brought to place its chief interest in the highest standard of public virtue, individuals who would otherwise be vicious, would be involuntarily led towards the virtue they behold in such esteem. For among the motive-powers of self-interest, none is so strong as the love of approbation. Thus, the society by which Helvetius himself was surrounded — the society of Parisian Saloons towards the close of the last century — placed its chief interest in the culture of the frivolous or sensual pleasures of life — it accorded its approbation to the successful gallant — and thus, men who would otherwise have been virtuous, were led by the excitement of example into competition for the honours bestowed on vice — and grave philosophers travestied themselves into gay deceivers. Seeing then plainly before his eyes the operation of social example on the corruption of individuals, it is no wonder that a man of morals so pure as those universally allowed to Helvetius, should have sought to construct a social system which might be as potent in redeeming the bad, as that in which he moved was potent in vitiating the good. Enough of Helvetius; from whom I passed into the region of more abstract metaphysics. But I soon grew chilled and dissatisfied with the materialists. Helvetius had charmed my fancy and sharpened my intellect — but he only

disquieted my soul. I was no better satisfied with Locke and Condillac, and I need not therefore say how little I could be contented with Hume, who pushes their argument to that extreme from which start the reactionary schools of the Scottish Reid and the German Kant. But Reid is rather an acute critic than a profound metaphysician, and the very depth of Kant only leaves us lost amidst the deeper abysses into which Truth recedes in proportion as we dive to her home. As a traveller left alone in the desert by his human guides turns for guidance to the stars, so, abandoned by the interpreters of Nature, I turned to Nature herself in her plainest and most visible signs. Reasoning on things hidden, by analogy drawn from things outward, I rebuilt my crumbling faith. Happy he whose doubts resolve themselves, as mine did, into that devout, confiding, immaterial hope, which promises in another life the key to all enigmas in this.

CONVERSATION THE SIXTH.

Progress from Morals to History — A state of Doubt most favourable to the study of the Past — Philosophical Historians dangerous — Hume and Gibbon — The advantages of Tacitus and Polybius in actual experience — History the Accuser of Mankind — The Greeks — Patriotism and Philanthropy — The Errors of Old — The Divine Hope of the Future.

"SLOWLY and reluctantly," continued L — (resuming the next day the thread of his intellectual history), "did I turn from the consideration of motives to that of actions — from Morals to History. Volney has said, in his lectures, that the proper state of mind for the examination of history is that in which we 'hold the judgment in suspense.' This truth is evident; yet they who allow the doctrine when couched in the above phrase, might demur if the phrase were a little altered, and, instead of a suspension of judgment, we spoke of a *state of doubt.* It is true! in this state — a state of investigating doubt — history should be studied. In doubt, all the faculties of the mind are aroused — we sift, we weigh, we examine — every page is a trial to the energies of the understanding. But confidence is

sleepy and inert. If we make up our minds beforehand to believe all we are about to read, the lecture glides down the memory without awakening one thought by the way. We may be stored with dates and legends; we may be able to conclude our periods by a fable about Rome; but we do not feel that we have reasoned as well as read. Our minds may be fuller, but our intellects are not sharper than they were before: we have studied, but not investigated: — to what use investigation to those who are already persuaded? There is the same difference in the advantage of history to him who weighs, because he mistrusts, and to him who discriminates nothing, because he believes all, as there is between the value of a commonplace book and a philosophical treatise. The first may be more full of facts than the last, but the last is facts turned to use. It is this state of rational doubt which a metaphysical course of study naturally induces. It is, therefore, *after* the investigation of Morals, that we should turn to History. Nor is this all the advantage which we derive from the previous study of morals. History would be, indeed, an old almanack to him who knows neither what is right nor what is wrong; where governments have been wise, where erroneous. History, regarded in the light of political utility, is, to quote Volney again, "a vast collection of moral and social experiments, which mankind make involuntarily and very expensively on

themselves." But we must know the principles of the science before we can apply the experiments.

A. And yet, while the real uses of history are philosophical, a mere narrator of facts is often a safer guide than a philosophical historian.

L. Because it is better to think for ourselves than to suffer others to think for us. A philosopher has a system; he views things according to his theory; he is unavoidably partial; and, like Lucian's painter, he paints his one-eyed princes in profile.

A. I suppose it is for that reason that the philosophical historians are more to be admired than trusted. Hume is not to be relied upon for the conscientious painstaking that aims at the accuracy of facts — Gibbon, on the contrary, is always painstaking, and therefore seldom inaccurate as to facts. Yet in the way the facts are generalized, and in the deductions drawn from them, Gibbon may mislead as much as Hume — that is, whenever Gibbon wants to make the facts of history illustrate the views of Gibbon.

L. It may perhaps be said of both those great writers, that they had very little sympathy with the multitude; and though they write the History of Nations, it seems as if we were reading the history of the few, without any clear conception of the state and condition of the many. They both regard the past ages through which they traverse, as accom-

plished and learned scholars, who had never participated very actively in the affairs of the world, and whose interest is with the agencies that represent the brain and intellect of an epoch, not with those that represent the warm-blooded popular heart of it. Thus, neither Hume nor Gibbon can ever understand the religious impulse, which, when it moves the heart of a people, is so much mightier in its effect than any philosophic dogma in the brain of a sage. With these historians the religious impulse is either a superstition or a fanaticism. Hume cannot overcome his hate of a Puritan, nor Gibbon his contempt for a Christian. And I repeat my belief that the reason for this want of facility to transport themselves to the past times which they describe, with a sufficient comprehension of the real character of those times so far as the history of such times was carried on by the people, is that they had never lived familiarly with the people of their own time. And this makes the difference between the philosophical historians of the modern world, and those of the ancient world.

A. Such as Polybius and Tacitus.

L. Exactly. Both Tacitus and Polybius had not only lived in a more turbulent age than our philosophical historians, but they had a more intense sympathy with the passion and movement of their age: their scholastic and sombre wisdom was the fruit of an actual and terrible experience. Gibbon

boasts of the benefit he derived to his History from his military studies in the militia; it was from no such holiday service that Polybius learned *his* method of describing wars. As the Megalopolitan passed through his stormy and bold career; as he took rough lessons from the camp, and imbued himself with the cold sagacity which the diplomatic intrigues he shared both required and taught, he was slowly acquiring that mass of observation, that impartial judgment of characters and facts, which distinguish the fragments of his great history, and elevate, what in other hands would have been but a collection of military bulletins into so inestimable a manual for the statesman and the civilian. And when we glance over the life of the more brilliant because more imaginative Roman, we see no less visibly how much the wisdom of the closet was won by the stern nature of those fields of action in which was cast the life of a Republican who had witnessed the reign of a Domitian. When we grow charmed to his page by the gloomy intenseness of his colourings — when crime after crime, in all the living blackness of those fearful days, arises before us — when in his grasping aphorisms the fierce secrets of Tyranny lie bared before us — when in every sentence we shudder at a record — in every character we mark a portent, yet a mirror, of the times we feel at once how necessary to that force and fidelity must have been the severity and darkness of his

experience. Through action, toil, public danger, and public honours, he sought his road to philosophy, a road beset with rapine and slaughter; every slave that fell stamped on his heart a warning, every horror he experienced animated and armed his genius. Saturated with the spirit of his age, his page has made that age incarnate to posterity — actual, vivified, consummate, and entire. Time has not resolved it into the dust of the charnel. The Magician has preserved the race in their size and posture; — motionless, breathless, — in all else, lifelike.

But, turning from these criticisms on historians to the effect which History produces, I cannot but think that its general effect tends to harden the heart against mankind. Its experience, so long, so consistent, so unvarying, seems a silent and irresistible accuser of the human species. Men have taken the greatest care to preserve their most unanswerable vilifier. All forms of government, however hostile to each other, seem alike in one effect — the general baseness of the governed. What differs the boasted Greece from the contemned Persia? — the former produces some hundred names which the latter cannot equal. True! But what are a few atoms culled from the sea-sands? — what the renown of a hundred great men to the happiness of the millions? Are not the Greek writers, the Greek sages, more than all others, full of contempt for the masses around

them? — the fraud, the ingratitude, the violence, the meanness, the misery of their fellow-beings — do not these make the favourite subject of ancient satire and ancient declamation? And even among their great men, how few on whose merits History can at once decide! — how few unsullied, even by the condemnation of their own time! Plutarch says that the good citizens of Athens were the best men the world ever produced; but that her bad citizens were unparalleled for their atrocities, their impiety, their perfidy.

A. And even the best were but citizens of the state — not citizens of the world. Philanthropy is the only consistent species of public virtue. A mere patriot may be honest in one thing, yet a knave in all else.

L. It is only by Philanthropy, a word I would avoid, because it has been so hackneyed and so abused — but by what other word can I express Man's sympathy for mankind in the abstract — on every soil, and in every condition? — it is only by philanthropy that we can expand the narrowness of patriotism; only by acknowledging the brotherhood which the word implies, that we can reconcile that antagonism between class and class, nation and nation, by which the history of the past teaches us to despair of any material amendment in the destinies of the future. For why study the mysteries of Legislation and Government, why ransack the past, and extend our fore-

sight to distant ages, if our skill can only improve, as hitherto it has only improved, the condition of oligarchies — if it can only give the purple and the palace to the few — if it must leave in every state the degraded many to toil, to sweat, to consume the day in a harsh and sterile conflict with circumstance for a bare subsistence; their faculties dormant; their energies stifled in the cradle; strangers to all that ennobles, refines, exalts, — if, at every effort to rise, they are encountered by a law, and if with them every enterprise darkens into a crime — if, when we cast our eyes along the vast plains of life, we see but one universal arena of labour, bounded on all sides by the gibbet, the hulks, the prison; all ignorance, prejudice, bloodshed, sin; — if this state is to endure for ever on earth, why struggle for a freedom which the few only can enjoy — for an enlightenment which can but call forth a few luminous sparks from an atmosphere of gloom — for a political prosperity which props a throne, and gives steeds to a triumphal car, and animates the winged words of eloquence, or the lofty speculations of science — and yet makes no calculable deduction from the sum of human miseries? Alas! if this be the eternal doom of mortality, let us close our books, let us shut the avenues to our minds and hearts, let us despise benevolence as a vanity, and speculation as a dream. Let us play the Teian with life, think only of the rose and vine; and since our most earnest endea-

vours can effect so little to others, let us not extend our hopes and our enjoyments beyond the small and safe circle of Self! No: man must either believe in the perfectibility of his species, or virtue and the love of others are but the boyish day-dreams of an amiable enthusiasm.

A. A belief in the perfectibility of our species that is, of the power conceded to mankind in general to advance progressively, not to perfection for each individual but, more and more towards it in the condition of states and populations, is a creed so popular that all candidates for power may subscribe to it on the hustings. But do you think any Englishman of good sense, whatever his political party — from the extremest Tory to the extremest Radical — accepts that doctrine in his own secret heart?

L. I cannot answer that question — I can only speak for myself: until I believed in that doctrine I saw nothing in which the bulk of mankind had any lively interest, whether in the examples which history adduces from the past, or in the speculations by which political philosophy would disturb the present for the sake of ameliorating the future. I must own that, until it broke upon me, I saw nothing in learning but despondency and gloom. As clouds across the Heaven, darkening the light, and fading one after the other into air, seemed the fleeting shadows which Philosophy had called forth between the earth and sun. If, day after day, in my solitary retreat, I

pondered over the old aspirations of sages, with the various jargon by which, in the pursuit of truth, they have disguised error, I felt that it was not to teach myself to be wise, but to learn to despair of wisdom. Couple the records of Philosophy with those of History; couple the fallacies of the wise with the sorrows and the sufferings of the multitude, and how dark and mournful is our knowledge of the past, and therefore our prospects of the future! And how selfish does this sentiment render our ambition for the present! How vain seem the mighty struggle and small fruit of those around us! Look at the agitation and ferment which stir the world while we speak: on what pretence can they who believe that the Past is the mirror of the Future, lash themselves into interest for any cause or principle, save that immediately profitable to self? To them, if deeply and honestly acquainted with history and the progress of knowledge — to them how vain must seem the struggles and aspirations of the crowd! Why do the people imagine a vain thing? Why the hope and the strife of the restless Gaul; or the slow murmur that foretells irruption through the bright lands of Italy? Why agitate ourselves for a name — an ideal good? These orations, and parchments, and meetings, and threats, and prayers — this clamour for "reform," — how miserable a delusion must they seem to him who believes that the *mass* of men must for ever be "the hewers of wood and drawers

of water!" To them no change raises the level of existence; famine still urges on to labour — want still forbids knowledge. What matters whether this law be passed, or that fleet be launched, or that palace built — their condition is the same; the happiest concurrence of accident and wisdom brings *them* but a greater certainty of labour. A free state does not redeem them from toil, nor a prudent despotism increase it. So long as the sun rises and sets, so long must their bread be won with travail, and their life "be rounded," with the temptation to crime. It seems, therefore, to me impossible for a wise and well-learned man to feel *sincerely*, and without self-interest, for the public good, unless he believe that laws and increased knowledge will at length, however gradually, devise some method of raising the great multitude to a nearer equality of comfort and intelligence with the few; that human nature is capable of a degree of amelioration which it seems never hitherto to have reached; and that the amelioration will be felt from the surface to the depth of the great social waters, over which the spirit shall move. The Republics of old never effected this object. To expect it, society must be altered as well as legislation. It is for this reason that I feel glad with an ingenious and admirable writer,* that even theory is

* The Author of "Essays on the Publication of Opinion." &c.

at work: I am glad that inquiry wanders, even to fallacies and chimæras. Out of that inquiry good may yet come; and some future Bacon overturn the axioms of an old school, polluted, not redeemed, by every new disciple. To the man who finds it possible to entertain this hope, how different an aspect the world wears! Casting his glance forward, how wondrous a light rests upon the future! the farther he extends his vision, the brighter the light. Animated by a hope more sublime than wishes bounded to earth ever before inspired, he feels armed with the courage to oppose surrounding prejudice, and the warfare of hostile customs. No sectarian advantage, no petty benefit is before him; he sees but the Regeneration of Mankind. It is with this object that he links his ambition, that he unites his efforts and his name! From the disease, and the famine, and the toil around, his spirit bursts into prophecy, and dwells among future ages; even if in error, he luxuriates through life in the largest benevolence, and dies — if a visionary — the visionary of the grandest dream!

CONVERSATION THE SEVENTH.

Description of an English landscape — The animal enjoyment of life — Solitary persons the least repining — Cowley on the Town and Country — L——'s mental progress from History to Works of Imagination — He is inspired to emulation, not by the Fame of Genius, but by the Luxury of Composition — Genius is peculiarly susceptible of enjoyment — It even *enjoys* Sadness — L——'s studies interrupted.

It is a singularly pretty spot in which L—— resides. Perhaps some of the most picturesque scenery in England is in the neighbourhood of London; and as I rode the other day, in the later April, along the quiet lane which branches from the main road to L——'s house, Spring never seemed to me to smile upon a lovelier prospect. The year had broken into its youth as with a sudden and hilarious bound. A little while before, I had passed along the same road — all was sullen and wintry — the March wind had swept along dry hedges and leafless trees — the only birds I had encountered were two melancholy sparrows in the middle of the road — too dejected even to chirp; but now a glory had passed over the earth — the trees were clad in that delicate and lively verdure which we cannot look upon with-

out feeling a certain freshness creep over the heart. Here and there thick blossoms burst in clusters from the fragrant hedge, and, as a schoolboy prankt out in the finery of his grandsire, the whitethorn seemed to mock at the past winter by assuming its garb. Above, about, around — all was in motion, in progress, in joy — the birds, which have often seemed to me like the messengers from earth to heaven — charged with the homage and gratitude of Nature, and gifted with the most eloquent of created voices to fulfil the mission; — the birds were upon every spray, their music in every breath of air. Just where the hedge opened to the left, I saw the monarch of English rivers glide on his serene and silver course; and in the valley on the other side of his waters, village, spire, cottage, hall, and villa, looked out among the luxuriant blossoms, and the vivid green by which they were encircled. It was a thoroughly English scene. For I have always thought that the peculiar characteristic of English scenery is a certain air of content. There is a happier smile on the face of an English landscape than I have ever beheld, even in the landscapes of the South: a happier though a less voluptuous smile — as if Nature were more at home.

Presently I came to the turn of the lane which led at once to L—'s house; in a few minutes I was at the gate. Within, the grounds, though not extensive, have the appearance of being so — the trees

are of great size, and the turf is broken into many a dell and hollow, which gives the lawn a wild and a park-like appearance. The house is quaint and old-fashioned in its architecture; it seems to have been begun at the latter period of the reign of James the First, and to have undergone sundry alterations, the latest of which might have occurred at the time of Anne. The old brown bricks are three parts covered with jessamine and ivy, and the room in which L— generally passes his day looks out upon a grove of chestnut-trees, amidst which, at every opening, are little clusters and parterres of flowers. And in this spot, half wood, half garden, I found my friend, seduced from his books by the warmth and beauty of the day, seated on a rustic bench, and surrounded by the numerous dogs that, of all species and all sizes, he maintains in general idleness and favour.

"I love," said L—, speaking of these retainers, "like old Montaigne, to have animal life around me. The mere consciousness and sensation of existence are so much stronger in brutes than in ourselves, their joy in the common air and sun is so vivid and buoyant, that I, who think we should sympathise with all things, if we would but condescend to remark all things, feel a contagious exhilaration of spirits in their susceptibility to pleasurable emotions. And how happy the sentiment of life *is!* — how glorious a calm we inhale in the warm sun! — how

rapturous a gladness in the fresh winds! — how profound a meditation and delight in the stillness of the 'starry time'! — how sufficient alone to make us happy is external nature, were it not for those artificial cares which we create for ourselves! Man would be happy but that he is forbidden to be so by men. The most solitary persons have always been the least repining."

A. But then their complacency arises from the stagnation of the intellect — it is indifference, not happiness.

L. Pardon me, I cannot think so. How many have found solitude not only, as Cicero calls it, the *pabulum* of the mind, but the nurse of genius! How many of the world's most sacred oracles have been uttered, like those of Dodona, from the silence of deep woods! Look over the lives of men of genius, — how far the larger proportion of them have been passed in loneliness! Now, for my part, I think solitude has its reward both for the dull and the wise; — the former are therein more sensible to the mere animal enjoyment which is *their* only source of happiness: the latter are not distracted from that contemplation, and those pursuits, which constitute the chief luxury of their life, by the irritation, the jealousy, the weariness, the round of small cares, which make up the existence of the crowd. There is a feeling of escape, when a man who has cultivated his faculties rather in thought than action, finds him-

self, after a long absence in cities, returned to the *spissa nemora domusque Nympharum*, which none but himself can comprehend. With what a deep and earnest enthusiasm Cowley luxuriates in that essay of his, perhaps the most eloquent in the language,— although, as a poet, the author of the 'Davideis' was idolised far beyond his merits by a courtly audience, and therefore was not susceptible, like most of his brethren, of that neglect by the crowd which disgusts our heart by mortifying our vanity. How calm, how august, and yet how profoundly joyful, is the vein with which he dwells on the contrast of the Town and the Country! "We are here among the vast and noble scenes of Nature; we are there among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of Divine bounty; we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice!"

A. The passage you quote is a beautiful illustration of that gentle variety in literature which may be classified as the poetry of sentiment. There are critics who affect to despise it; yet even a reasoner without sentiment lacks the gift of persuasion.

L. I did not myself appreciate the worth of that quality in genius to which you give the name of sentiment, and which is as much opposed to sentimentality as the use of a thing is opposed to its abuse, until — saddened by the contemplation of men in their gloomiest and most repulsive aspect —

that is, as they appear in History — I turned to behold them in their brightest and most attractive aspect — that is, as they appear in Fiction. Then it seemed to me that I best understood the character of a Time or a People by examining the lighter literature which had been engendered by the Time, and been familiarized to the People. I make this distinction between the Time and the People — for the Time has a short life and the People a long one. It rarely happens that the most popular writer for the time is the writer most preserved by the people. Cowley, for the time, was more popular than Milton; Lilye, for the time, more popular than Shakspeare. It is only in very rare instances, such as Petrarch and Dante, that the taste of the time unites with the judgment of the generations that form a people as to the rank which a nation accords to its poet — by poet, I mean a writer who expresses truth through fiction, by the creation of images which never existed, or the narrative of events which never happened — and in this essential requisite of poetry in its highest form it has sometimes, though not often, happened that a poet dispensed with the mechanism of verse. Is not Cervantes a greater poet than Lope de Vega? Is not Rousseau a greater poet than De Lille? Are not Boccaccio, and Richardson, and Sterne, to be judged as poets? Is it not a doubt whether Scott be not a greater poet in 'The Bride of Lammermoor' than in 'The Lady of the Lake'?

But in the course of this change of study my mind changed its objects of desire. For the first time I conceived the ambition which animates an author. There is a northern legend of a man who had resisted all the temptations the earth could offer. The demon opened to his gaze the illusive marvels of Elfland, in which mosses and leaves took the semblance of gems and gold. The tempter succeeded, and the man who had not cared for the substantial treasures coveted the phantasmal. It was thus I gazed on that world of Fiction, in which the simplest things in Nature are transformed into such riches in Art. How I envied even less the power of Enchanters who could so transform, than the delight which I conceived them to have felt in the exercise of the power! "Must not," I exclaimed, "must not the rapture we ascribe to some happy soul, just set free from the body, have been felt by him who created the Ariel, employed or dismissed at his will? How light must have been his heart and how playful his spirit on that midsummer night when he transported the Fairies into Greece, and Pallas was banished from her own violet-crowned city to make way for Pease-blossom and Puck!" Surely the essence of Genius *is* in its exquisite sense of enjoyment. Nay, even where its creations are sombre and mournful, does not the artist inwardly exult in his power to bewitch into charm the very aspect of grief?

You see then that I was impressed, erroneously

or truly, with the belief, that in cultivating the imagination I should cultivate my happiness. Yes, I repeat I was envious, not so much of the fame of the writers who have adorned the world with the images they created, as of the enjoyment they must have experienced in creating. I had hitherto been covetous of learning. I now said, "Let me go forth from the schools, and see if, from the outward nature common to all, and the inward nature peculiar to myself, I cannot originate some new form of art."

A. And did you find that luxury in imaginative creation which you expected?

L. I might have done so, but I stopped short in my apprenticeship.

A. And the cause?

L. One bright day in June, as I was sitting alone in my room, I was suddenly aroused from my reverie by a sharp and sudden pain that shot through my breast, and when it left me I fainted away. I was a little alarmed by this circumstance, but thought the air might relieve me. I walked out, and ascended a hill at the back of the house. My attention being now aroused and directed towards myself, I was startled to find my breath so short that I was forced several times to stop in the ascent. A low, short cough, which I had not heeded before, now struck me as a warning, which I ought to prepare myself to obey. That evening, as I looked in the glass, for the first time for several weeks with any care in

the survey, I perceived that my apprehensions were corroborated by the change in my appearance. My cheeks were fallen, and I detected, in the midst of their natural paleness, that hectic which never betrays its augury. I saw that my days were numbered, and I lay down on my pillow that night with the resolve to prepare for death. The next day, when I looked over my scattered papers; when I saw the mighty schemes I had commenced, and recalled the long and earnest absorption of all my faculties which even that commencement had required, I was seized with a sort of despair. It was evident that I could now perform nothing great, and as for trifles, ought they to occupy the mind of one whose eye was on the grave? There was but one answer to this question. I committed my fragments to the flames; and now, indeed, there came upon me a despondency which I had not felt before. I saw myself in the condition of one who, after much travail in the world, has found a retreat, and built a home, and who, in the moment he says to his heart, "Now thou shalt have rest!" beholds himself summoned away. I had obtained an object — it was torn from me — my staff was broken, and it was only left to me to creep to the tomb, without easing by any support the labour of the way. I had coveted no petty aim — I had not bowed my desires to the dust and mire of men's common wishes — I had bid my ambition single out a lofty end and pursue it by

generous means. In the dreams of my spirit, I had bound the joys of my existence to this one aspiring hope, nor had I built that hope on the slender foundations of a crude inexperience — I had studied, I had thought, I had toiled, before I ventured in my turn to produce. And now, between myself and the fulfilment of schemes which I had formed with no trivial care, and to which I looked for no undue reward — there yawned the Eternal Gulf. It seemed to me as if I were condemned to leave life, at the moment I had given to life a worthy object. These thoughts at first were very bitter. In vain I said to my soul, "Why grieve? — Death itself does not appal thee. And, after all, what can life's proudest objects bring thee better than rest?" — But we learn at last to conquer our destiny by surveying it firmly; there is no regret which is not to be vanquished by resolve. And now, when I saw myself declining day by day, I turned to those more elevating and less earthly meditations, which supply us, as it were, with wings, when the feet fail. They have become to me dearer than the dreams which they succeeded, and they whisper to me of a brighter immortality than that of Fame.

CONVERSATION THE EIGHTH.

L——'s rapid decline — The memory becomes more acute as we approach death — L——'s observations on the saying that "Life is a Jest" — The vanity of Ambition — Our errors arise from our desire to be greater than we are — Thoughts on Superstition — The early Astrologers — Philanthropy — The fear of assisting in Changes of which the good to a future generation may not compensate the evil to the present — Contrast between the tranquil lives of men of genius and the revolutions which their works effect — The hope of intercourse with great minds in a Future State — The sanctity of the Grave — The 'Phædo' of Plato — The picture of the last moments of Socrates — The unsatisfactory arguments of the Heathen for the Immortality of the Soul — Revealed Religion has led men into more logical examination of the arguments suggested by Natural Theology — Disbelief involves us in greater difficulties than Faith — Our doubts do not dishearten us if we once believe in God — L——'s last hours — His farewell to Nature — His death.

It is with a melancholy pleasure that I have been made sensible of the interest that these conversations have excited in the gentler and more thoughtful of the tribe of readers.* I have received

* I should here observe that these dialogues first appeared in a detached shape in the 'New Monthly Magazine.'

more anonymous letters than I care to name, complaining of the long silence I have preserved, and urging me to renew Dialogues, already so often repeated, that I might well imagine (knowing how impatient the readers of a periodical generally are of subjects continued in a series) that they had sufficiently exhausted the indulgence of the public. To me individually little or no credit is due for any interest which these papers may have created. I am but the echo of another man's voice; or, to use an old and graceful metaphor, I do but furnish the string which keeps the flowers together. Alas! the garland is now complete, and I have only to place it on a tomb.

And now I saw L—— daily, for his disease increased rapidly upon him, and I would not willingly have lost any rays of that sun which was so soon to set for ever. Nothing creates in us so many confused and strange sentiments as a conversation on those lofty topics of life or nature — rarely pleasing, except to Wisdom which contemplates, and Genius which imagines ; — a conversation on such topics with one whose lips are about to be eternally closed in the world we know. There is something of solemnity in the last words of any man, even on common topics: how much more in the last words of thoughtful genius upon matters consecrated to our gravest thoughts and our divinest hopes!

The day was calm and cloudless as, towards the

end of August, I rode leisurely to L—'s solitary house; his strength had so materially declined during the few days past, that I felt a gloomy presentiment that I was about to see him for the last time. He had always resolved, and I believe this is not uncommon with persons in his disease, not to take to his bed until absolutely compelled. His habitual amusements, few and tranquil, were such as he could happily continue to the last; and his powers of conversation, naturally so rich and various, were not diminished by the approach of death: perhaps they were only rendered more impressive by the lowered tones of the sweetest of human voices, or the occasional cough that mingled his theories on this world with a warning of the next. I have observed that, as in old people the memory usually becomes the strongest of the faculties,* so it also does with those whom mortal sickness, equally with age, detaches from the lengthened prospects of the future. Forbidden to seek objects from without, the mind turns within for its occupation, and the thoughts, formerly impelled towards hope, nourish themselves on retrospection. Once I had not noted in L—— the extraordinary

* That is, properly speaking, the memory so far as it embraces early acquisitions or transactions. It is a common observation, that old people remember what happened fifty years ago, and forget what happened yesterday. Their souls have gone back to Youth as the fitting port for the voyage to Immortality.

strength of memory and the ready copiousness of its stores which he now seemed to display. His imagination had been more perceptible than his learning — now, every subject on which we conversed elicited hoards of knowledge, always extensive and often minute, of which perhaps he himself had been previously unconscious. It is a beautiful sight, even in the midst of its melancholy, the gradual passing away of one of the better order of souls — the passions lulled as the mind awakens, and a thousand graces of fortitude and gentleness called forth by the infirmities of the declining frame.

Full of these reflections I arrived at the house of my dying friend. "My master, sir," said the old servant, "has passed but a poor night; he seems in low spirits this morning, and I think he will be glad to see you, for he has inquired repeatedly what o'clock it was, as if time passed heavily with him." The old man wiped his eyes as he spoke, and I followed him into L—'s study. The countenance of the sufferer was greatly changed even since I last saw him. The eyes seemed more sunken, and the usual flush of his complaint had subsided into a deep but transparent paleness. I took his hand, and he shook his head gently as I did so. "The goal is nearly won!" said he faintly, but with a slight smile. I did not answer, and he proceeded after a short pause — "It has been said that 'life is a jest;' if so it is a very sorry one, and, like bad jests in general, its

dulness is the greater as we near the close. At the end of a long illness it is only the dregs of a man's spirit that are left to him. People talk of the moral pangs which attend the death-bed of a sinner — as well might they talk of the physical weakness of a dying wrestler. The mental and the physical powers are too nearly allied for us fairly to speculate on the fidelity of the one when we can have no doubt as to the treason of the other. Happy in my case that the endurance if not the elasticity of my mind lingers with me to the last! This morning I was looking over some papers not destroyed with the rest, and full of my early visions, aspirations of fame, and longings after earthly immortality. I am fortunate that time is not allowed me to sacrifice happiness to these phantoms. A man's heart must be very frivolous if the possession of fame rewards the labour to attain it. And, after all, how few writers have had any real enjoyment in the reputation they acquired while in life! No doubt there are numbers who praise them behind their backs, and thank them for priceless hours of instruction or delight; yet scarcely a murmur of such praise or such gratitude ever travels to their ears. But wherever some other man envies or hates, calumniates or reviles them, his voice they are sure to hear!"

A. Still, there is the reward of our own heart which none can take away — our proud self-esteem, and, if you will, our fond appeal to the justice of an after-age.

sider of it — what a singular fatality is that which makes it unwise to cultivate our divinest emotions! We bear within us the seeds of greatness; but suffer them to spring up, and their growth overshadows both our sense and our happiness! Note the errors of mankind; how mysteriously have they arisen from the desire to be higher than we are! As the banyan-tree soars aloft only to return to the mire, we would climb to the heaven, and find ourselves once more in the dust. Thus, looking up to the starred and solemn heavens girt with the vast solitudes of unpeopled Nature — hearkening to the "live thunder," or suffering the mighty winds to fill their hearts with a thousand mysterious voices — mankind in the early time felt the inspiration of something above them: they bowed to the dark *afflatus;* they nourished the unearthly dream; and they produced — what? — SUPERSTITION! The darkest and foulest of moral Demons sprang from the desire of men to shape forth a God, and their successors made earth a Hell by their efforts to preserve the mysteries and repeat the commands of Heaven!

How beautiful, how high were those desires in man's heart which lifted it up to the old Chaldæan falsehoods of Astrology! Who can read at this day of those ancient seers, striving to win from the loveliest and most glorious objects given to our survey, the secrets of empires, the prodigies of time, the destinies of the universe, — without a solemn and

kindling awe, an admiration at the vast conception even of so unwise a dream? Who first thought of conning the great page of Heaven? — who first thought that in those still, and cold, and melancholy orbs, our chronicles were writ? Whoever it was, his must have been a daring and unearthly soul; but the very loftiness of its faculties produced ages of delusion, and priestcraft, and error to the world. Leave for one moment the chain of the petty KNOWN — give wings to the Mind — let the aspiration loose — and what may be the result? How rarely gain! — how rarely aught but a splendid folly! As the fireworks that children send forth against a dark sky, our ambition burns, and mounts, and illumes for one moment the dim vault of the uncomprehended space, but falls to the earth spoiled of its lustre — brilliant, but useless — ascending, but, exploring not — a toy to all, and a light to none.

"There is one ambition," said I, "which you do not mean thus to characterise — the ambition of philanthropy — the desire more

'to raise the wretched than to rise;'

and you, who believe in human perfectibility, can appreciate at its proper value that order of ambition."

"You kindly remind me," said L——, "of one of the greatest consolations with which a man, who has any warmth or benevolence of heart, can depart

this world—the persuasion that he leaves his species gradually advancing towards that completer virtue and more catholic happiness which his noblest ambition would desire for them. Night, according to the old Egyptian creed, is the dark Mother of all things; as ages leave her, they approach the light. That which the superficial dread, is in reality the Vivifier of the world — I mean the everlasting Spirit of Change. And, figuring forth unconsciously to themselves this truth, the Egyptians, we are told by Porphyry, represented their demons as floating upon the waters — 'for ever restless and evoking the great series of Mutabilities.' Yet who lightly cares to take upon himself the fearful responsibility of shaking the throned opinions of his generation, knowing that centuries may pass before the good that is worked shall compensate for the evil done? This fear, this timidity of conscience it is, that makes us cowards to the Present, and leaves the great souls that should lead on Reform inert and sluggish, while the smaller spirits, the journeymen of Time, just creep up inch by inch to the exact height which Necessity demands, leaving the world ages and ages behind that far goal which the few, in heart, and eye, and speculation, have already reached."

A. One of the strange things that happen daily is this: men who the most stir the lives of others, lead themselves the most silent and tranquil life. It is curious to read how Kant, than whom Philosophy

never knew a bolder revolutionist, himself lived on from day to day, the mere creature of his habits. As some old Italian proverb has it, 'The candle shines far, but it shields itself in a small lantern.' So with philosophers and poets generally — how wonderful the contrast between the quiet of their existence and the turbulent effects they produce! This, perhaps secretly to ourselves, makes the great charm in visiting the calm and still retreats whence the oracles of the world have issued — the hermitage of Ermenonville — the fortress of Wartburg; the one where Rousseau fed his immortal fancies — the other whence burst, from the fiery soul of Luther, the light that yet lives along the world: — what reflections must the silence and the mouldering stone awaken, as we remember the vivid and overflowing hearts of the old inhabitants! Plato and his Cave are, to all ages, the type of the Philosopher and his Life.

L. "What lofty and divine hopes spring out of the belief in immortality! One of the purest of these is the expectation of a more entire intelligence — of the great gift of conversing with all who have lived before us — of questioning the past ages and unravelling their dark wisdom. How much in every man's heart dies away unuttered! How little of what the sage knows does the sage promulgate! How many chords of the lyre within the poet's heart have been dumb to the world's ear! All this

untold, uncommunicated, undreamed-of store of wisdom and of harmony, it may be the privilege of our immortality to learn. The best part of genius, the world often knows not; — the Plato buries much of his lore within his Cave — and this, the High Unknown, is the humblest man's inheritance. With these thoughts," continued L——, "you see how easy it is for the parting soul to beautify and adorn Death! Nay, if we begin betimes, we can learn to make the prospect of the grave the most seductive of human visions — by little and little we wean from its contemplation all that is gloomy and abhorrent — by little and little we hoard therein all that is brightest and most alluring in the multiform images of life. As the neglected genius whispers to his muse, 'Posterity shall know thee, and *thou* shalt live when I am no more,' so we find in this hallowed and all-promising future, a recompense for every mortification, for every disappointment in the present. It is the belief of the Arabs, that to the earliest place of human worship there clings a guardian sanctity — there the wild bird rests not, there the wild beast may not wander; it is the blessed spot on which the eye of God dwells, and which man's deepest memories preserve. As with the earliest place of worship, so is it with the latest haven of repose — as with the spot where our first imperfect adoration was offered up, our first glimpses of divinity indulged, so should it be with that where our full knowledge of

the Arch-Cause begins, and we can pour forth a gratitude no longer checked and darkened by the troubles and cares of earth. Surely, if any spot in the world be sacred, it is that small green mound in which grief ceases, and from which, if the harmonies of creation, if the voice within our hearts, if the impulse which makes man so ready a believer in a world to come, — if these mock and fool us not with an everlasting lie, we spring up on the untiring wings of a pangless and seraphic life — those whom we loved, around us; the aspirings that we nursed, fulfilled; our nature, universal intelligence; our atmosphere, eternal love!"

Some time afterwards, observing a volume of Plato on the table, our conversation fell upon that divine philosopher, and on his dialogue of the 'Phædo' in particular.

"Of all the Dialogues of Plato," said L——, "the 'Phædo' has been perhaps the most read, and may be considered the most interesting. It is the most interesting, partly from its accurate account of the last hours of Socrates, and partly from our absorbing curiosity to know the opinions of the wisest of the ancients respecting the immortality of the soul. Perhaps there is no part of our studies which bequeathes a more delightful and enduring memory. It lives within us like the recollection of some southern landscape, wherein the colouring of the heavens forms the prominent beauty — which

we were too intoxicated to examine in detail, but in which every separate feature is confused and blended into one dim and delicious whole. Each of Plato's Dialogues has more or less of the dramatic spirit — but the 'Phædo' is the most dramatic of all. It is a picture of extraordinary sweetness and grandeur, in which the figures are distinct and lifelike. We see the crowd of disciples, some Athenians, some Foreigners, waiting in the early morning of their master's last day by the gates of the prison — the ship of Theseus * having now returned — its stern crowned with flowers — as in token at once of sacrifice and festival. Within, while they wait, the magistrates are freeing Socrates from his bonds. There the disciples stand, mournful but not despondent — exalted by the former teachings of their guide — influenced by 'that wonderful passion — *not* of pity,' — which Plato has so beautifully described — in which grief at their master's death is mingled with all the sweet and musical consolations inspired by his past converse. The gaoler appears — the door opens — they are with Socrates. The manner in which, after dismissing the loud sorrow of Xantippe, the conversation glides into its glorious topics, is singularly natural and simple. We see Socrates 'sitting upright on his bed,' and moralising gaily on the relief from his fetters—till, one thought

* No criminal could be executed until its return.

begetting another, he comes to his celebrated explanation of the causes why one 'who has rightly studied philosophy should be bold when about to die.' The little incidental and graphic touches with which, here and there, Plato breaks the dialogue, render it peculiarly living and effective; and the individuality of Socrates, in that mixture of easy gaiety and lofty thought, which divides his listeners between weeping and laughter — that patient confidence with which he is wont to hear objections — and the art with which he draws on the speaker to answer himself, make the character as distinctly and appropriately marked as a personage in one of Shakspeare's plays. The utter want of any rhetorical attempt to excite an effeminate compassion — the plain and homely simplicity with which the whole tragedy is told, from the time when, stroking the limb which the fetters had galled, Socrates observes smilingly how the painful had been supplied by pleasurable sensations — or his caressingly touching the long hair of the supposed narrator, who sat on a low stool beside him — to the close, when, returned from the bath — after embracing for the last time his children, he sits down again amidst his friends, and 'did not speak much afterwards:' 'and it was now near the setting of the sun;'* the weeping ser-

* "How watched his better sons the farewell ray
That closed their murdered sage's latest day!

vant of the magistrate, coming to bid him farewell — the request of Socrates to bid them bring the poison — the answer of Crito, 'Nay, the sun yet lingers on the mountains' — the undaunted gaze of Socrates on the countenance of his executioner (so untranslatably expressed in the word *ταυρηδὸν*) as he took the fatal draught; — the sudden burst of sorrow from his disciples, which a few words from the dying man causes them to blush for; — the melancholy walk to and fro that narrow cell, for the better operation of the poison;—the homely expression, and 'when he felt his limbs grow heavy, he laid himself down to die;' — the portrait of the executioner pressing his foot strongly and asking if he felt the pressure, of which, alas! he was unconscious; — the gradual progress of the numbing potion from the feet to the nobler parts, as Socrates himself points out to those around his bed, how the limbs stiffen and grow cold — adding, in that phrase of

> Not yet — not yet — Sol pauses on the hill,
> The precious hour of parting lingers still," &c.

It is a pity that Byron injured the whole of this beautiful passage by the epithet in the following line —

> "But sad his light to *agonizing* eyes."

There was no agony in the tears that his pupils shed for Socrates. "The sadness was," as Plato says, "not wholly unpleasing." The death of a man thoroughly great and good does not allow the terror and the prostration of agony.

unconscious pathos, 'When it reaches *my heart* I shall leave you;' — that last and mystic command (which the later Platonists have endeavoured to explain as an emblematic desire of purification and healing) to sacrifice to Æsculapius; — the inquiry of Crito, 'Hast thou no other bidding?' — the quiet sorrow of what follows — 'To this he made no reply, but, after he had been a short time still, he moved, and the man covered him, and his eyes grew fixed. And Crito perceived it, and closed his eyes and mouth. — This, Echecrates, was the end of our companion;' — the whole of this picture is, I say, so great a masterpiece of truth and tenderness — the presentation of so sublime a spectacle, that in itself it would render the 'Phædo' one of the most valuable of the possessions we derive from the golden Past. But how much more thrilling and divine it becomes, when this, the last scene of such a life, is coloured with all the hopes and auguries of the departing soul — when the passage from this world is smoothed by august conjectures on the world to be — and the Sage lavishes his wisdom on the glorious aphorism that to die is to be immortal!

We do not wish to disturb the thoughts which this dialogue bequeathes us, by criticising the details — we would rather number its recollection among our feelings than submit it coldly to the test of our reasonings. Alas! if we do the latter, the effect begins gloomily to fade away. For I must own that,

amidst all the poetry of the allusions — amidst all the ingenuity of the arguments — I feel, when I fix the mind rather than the imagination or the heart upon the conclusions of the great heathen, that they fail to convince. Almost every argument he uses for the immortality of man is equally applicable to the humblest of the brutes — the least visible of the animalculæ in a drop of water. Such, for instance, as this, which is the least obscure, perhaps, of all his propositions, and which, nevertheless, is almost a scholastic frivolity. 'A contrary cannot receive a contrary, nor the contrary of that which it introduces. What is that which, when in the body, renders the body living? — The soul. Soul therefore introduces life to that which it occupies. What is the contrary of life? — Death. But the soul cannot receive the contrary of what it introduces — it cannot therefore receive death. But what do we call that which does not receive death? — Immortal.' Such is one among the most intelligible arguments of the wisest of the heathens. Can we wonder when we are told that Socrates and Plato made but few converts in Athens to the immortality of the soul? Adopt the argument, and the fly at the window, the spider which is now watching it — nay, the very tree waving before us green and living, have, equally with myself, that which introduces life, and cannot receive the contrary to that which it introduces — its soul is therefore immortal as my own.

But a graver objection to the whole reasoning is, that the question is begged, when Socrates affirms that that which gives life is the soul. This is the exact point at issue between the materialist and ourselves. What can be so bewildering as the more subtle refinements about 'harmony' and 'parity,' and the previous existence of the soul? — on which last, however, the Sage's arguments are less vague than they are with respect to its existence hereafter, and which yet, if true, would destroy the whole blessing of Immortality: for if the soul has existed ere it yet entered our body — if our seeming acquisitions are rather dim reminiscences of what we knew before — if the delight that follows upon our discovery of a truth is nothing more than the recognition, the refinding, as it were, something formerly familiar and allied to us* — where is that perfect self-identity which can alone render a new

* Reid's assertion of the inherent disposition to Truth, or "instinctive prescience of human actions which makes us rely on the testimony of our fellow-creatures," has been preceded by the 'Phædo' — though the remark is intended to apply to the pre-existence of the soul; and the fantastic notion that learning is but reminiscence, "The truth of this," says Cebes, "is manifested by a most beautiful argument. Men, when interrogated properly, will speak of everything just as it is: could they do this unless science and right reason resided (or were inherent) in them?"

existence a blessing that we ourselves can feel? What comfort is it to me to think that my soul may live again under other shapes; but *I* — my sentient faculty — my memory and perception, not feel the renewed existence? This would not be a continuance of myself, but a lapse into another as distinct from myself — as Socrates from Newton. No — there is nothing in the 'Phædo' that could convince a modern unbeliever; but there is everything that can charm and delight one who already believes — who desires only to embellish his belief with beautiful thoughts, — and who from the Pisgah of his conviction looks down on those who have strayed, erring, but with faith, over the glimmering and uncertain wastes of the past Desert. All our later upholders of Natural Religion have, even if sceptics in Revealed, been more successful in their reasonings than this lofty ancient. It has been among the peculiar blessings of Revealed Religion that it has led men more logically and deliberately to the arguments for Natural Theology. Its very enemies have, in dissenting from its principles, confirmed its most grand conclusions. Revelation made the eternity of the soul a grave and settled doctrine, which scholars could not bandy about according to their fantasies. It attracted the solemn attention of sages to all the arguments for and against it. And out of a thousand disputes have proceeded the reasonings upon which it has found its basis. When our Lord said,

'I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD,' he uttered one of the sublimest of his prophecies. Christian faith has called forth the countless luminaries of Truth; not only the Reformers, who in examining Religion established Liberty, but the Philosophers, who, in advancing to the realm of doubt, have extended the empire of thought — they penetrated lands which we have since converted — they discovered the shadowy regions of uncertainty since colonized with truths: and darkness has produced our guides and constellations, as night awakes the stars. Instead of checking Philosophy, Faith has made it yet more searching and severe. If speculations indeed remain which our understanding cannot solve — if the Origin of Evil yet perplex and sadden us — if we cannot guess how the soul enters nor why departs — nor know the secret of 'the harmony of the lyre;'* — we can still fall back upon the resting-places we have gained, and not suffer our ignorance to be the judge because it fails to become the witness. Satisfied that, if Faith has its enigmas, Disbelief is yet more obscure, we learn the Philosophy of Hope, — and, when the soul shrinks back, appalled, from the wilderness of space around it, and the dazzle of the sun, we may trust yet that He who gifted it with its wings may hereafter increase its strength, guide its wanderings, and enable it to face the intolerable

* The beautiful simile in the 'Phædo.'

lustre which now blinds its gaze. Once convinced that there is a God, and we annihilate Despair! — we may still have our doubts and our desires — our sorrows and our cares — but it is enough to know that we are destined to survive them. And when we are weary of our vain wanderings, we remember that Thought can find its home with God, and it is on a Father's bosom that we hush ourselves to rest!"

In discourses of this sort, the day wore to its close, and when will the remembrance of that day ever depart from me? It seemed to me, as we sat by the window, the sun sinking through the still summer air, the leaves at rest, but how full of life, the motes dancing in the beam, the birds with their hymns of love, and every now and then the chirp of the grasshopper —

> "That evening reveller who makes
> His life an infancy and sings his fill;" —

it seemed to me, as we so sat, and, looking upon the hushed face of our mother Nature, I listened to the accents of that impassioned wisdom, so full of high conjecture, and burning vision, and golden illustration, which belonged to him for whom life was closing, as if I could have fancied that the world was younger by some two thousand years, and that it was not one of this trite and dull age's children who was taking his farewell of life, but rather some

enthusiast of that day when knowledge was both a passion and a dream, when the mysteries of the universe and the life-to-come were thought the most alluring of human themes, and when, in the beautiful climates of the West, the sons of Wisdom crept out to die among the trees they had peopled with divinities, and yielded their own spirits to the Great Soul of which they were a part, and which their mysterious faith had made the Life and Ruler of the world.*

And now the sun sank, and

"Maro's shepherd star
Watched the soft silence with a loving eye."

"Do you remember," said L——, "a story in one of the old English Chronicles, how a bird flew into the king's chamber, when the king was conversing with some sage upon the nature of the soul? 'Behold!' said the sage, 'it is like that bird while within this room; you can note its flight and motions, but you know not whence it came ere it entered, nor can ye guess whither it shall fly when it leaves this momentary lodging.'"

* But Phornutus, by Jupiter, understands the Soul of the world, he writing thus concerning him: ὥσπερ δὲ ἡεῖς, &c. "As we ourselves are governed by a soul, so hath the world, in like manner, a soul that containeth it, and this is called Zeus, being the cause of life to all things that live," &c. — CUDWORTH, vol. I. p. 529.

It chanced that, as L—— spoke, a small bird — I know not of what name or tribe — suddenly alighted on the turf beneath the window, and, though all its fellow-songsters were already hushed, poured forth a long, loud, sweet lay, that came, in the general silence, almost startlingly upon the ear. "Poor bird!" said L——, musingly, "it is thy farewell to one who, perhaps, has given thee food for thy little ones. And," continued he, after a short pause — and lifting up his eyes, he gazed long and earnestly around the scene, now bathed in all the darkening but tender hues of the summer night — "and shall I be ungrateful to that Power which has, since my boyhood, fed my thoughts — have *I* no farewell for that Nature whom, perhaps, I behold for the last time? O, unseen Spirit of Creation! that watchest over all things — the desert and the rock, no less than the fresh water bounding on like a hunter on his path, when his heart is in his step — or the valley girded by the glad woods, and rippling with the yellow corn — to me, thus sad and baffled, thou hast ministered as to the happiest of thy children! — thou hast whispered tidings of unutterable comfort to a heart which the world sated while it deceived! thou gavest me a music, sweeter than that of palaces, in the mountain wind! — thou badest the flowers and the common grass smile up to me as children to the face of their father! — Like the eye of a woman first loved to the soul of the poet,

was the face of every soft and never-silent star to me! Nature! my mother Nature! as the infant in the harsh slavery of schools pines for home, I yearned within the dark walls of cities, and amidst the hum of unfamiliar men, for thy sweet embrace, and thy bosom whereon to lay my head, and weep wild tears at my will! I thank thee, Nature, that thou art round and with me to the last! Not in the close thoroughfares of toil and traffic — not tethered to a couch, whence my eyes, asking for thee, would behold only those dim walls which are the dying man's worst dungeon, or catch through the lattice the busy signs and crowded tenements of the unsympathising herd; — not *thus* shall my last sigh be rendered up to the Great Fount of Life! To the mystic moment when the breath flutters and departs, thy presence will be round me, and the sentiment of thy freedom bathe my soul like a fresh air! Farewell thou, and thy thousand ministrants and children! — every leaf that quivers on the bough — every dewdrop that sparkles from the grass — every breeze that animates the veins of earth, are as friends, that I would rather know around my death-bed than the hollow hearts and ungenial sympathies of my kind! O Nature, farewell! if we are reunited, can I feel in a future being thy power, and thy beauty, and thy presence, more intensely than I have done in this?"

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When I was about to take leave of L— for the night, he asked me, in a meaning voice, to stay with him a little longer: "The fact is," said he, "that Dr. — implies a doubt whether I shall see another day; so be with me, at least, till I fall asleep. I mean," added he, smiling, "not in the metaphorical, but the literal sense of the word."

Accordingly, when he retired for the night, I sat by his bedside, and we continued to converse, for he wished it, though but by fits and starts: he gave me several instructions as to his burial, and as to various little bequests not mentioned in his formal testament. While indifferent to the companionship of men, he had never been ungrateful for their affection: the least kindness affected him sensibly, and he was willing in death to show that he had not forgotten it. Indeed I have observed, that the more we live out of the world, the more little courtesies, such as in the crowd are unheeded, are magnified into favours: true that the same process of exaggeration occurs in respect to petty affronts or inconsiderate slights. The heart never attains the independence of the mind.

Before the window, which looked out into the garden, the dark tops of the trees waved mournfully to and fro; and above, in deep relief, was the sky, utterly cloudless, and alive with stars. "My eyes are very heavy," said L—; "close the curtains round my head." I did so, and crept softly into the next

room, where the nurse sat dozing in a large chair by the fireside.

"Does he sleep, sir?" said she, waking up as I approached.

"He will shortly," said I: "he seems inclined to it."

"Poor gentleman! he will soon be out of his sufferings," said the nurse; and she therewith took a huge pinch of snuff.

Yes! this is the world's notion. With what wondrous ingenuity they shift off the pain of regret! A friend, a brother, a husband, a son, dies — they thank God he is out of his afflictions! In one sense they are right. They make the best of their own short summer, and do not ask the cloud to stay longer than suffices to call up the flowers or refresh the soil. Yet this is a narrow view of the subject of death. A bright genius disappears, a warm heart is stilled, and we think only (when we console ourselves) of the escape of the individual from his bed of pain. But ought we not to think of the loss that the world, that our whole race, sustains? I believe so. How many thoughts which might have preached conviction to the universe will be stricken for ever dumb by the early death of one human being! What services to earth might have been effected by that inquisitive, ardent, tender spirit, which to-morrow will be known upon earth no more!

"Poor gentleman!" quoth the nurse, "he will

soon be out of his sufferings!" and therewith she took a huge pinch of snuff. — What self-comforters we are!

"He is a good gentleman!" said she again, turning round to the fire; "and so fond of dumb animals. Cæsar, sir, the dog Cæsar, is at the foot of the bed, as usual? — ay, I warrant he lies there, sir, as still as a mouse. I am sure them creturs know when we are sick or not. Ah! sir, how the dog will take on, when —" and the nurse, breaking off, applied again to her snuff-box.

I could not bear to hear the woman talk thus, and I soon stole again into the next room. What a stillness there was in it! It seemed palpable. Stillness is not silent, at least to the heart. Hushing my own breath, I passed on to the curtained bed. L—'s hand was flung over the pillow. I took it into mine — the pulse was almost imperceptibly low, but it fluttered nevertheless. I was about to drop the hand, when L— half turned round, and that hand gently pressed my own. I heard a slight sigh, and, fancying he was awake, I bent over to look into his face. The light from the window came full upon it, and I was awed by the exceeding beauty of the smile that rested on the lips. But those lips had fallen from each other! I pressed the pulse again. No — the fluttering was gone. I started away with an unutterable tightness at my heart. I moved to the door, and called to

the nurse. She came quickly; yet I thought an hour had passed before she crossed the threshold. We went once more to the bed — and there, by his master's face, sat the poor dog. He had crept softly up from his usual resting-place; and when he saw us draw aside the curtain, he looked at us so wistfully, that — no, I cannot go on! — The tale is told.

THE INFLUENCE OF LOVE

UPON

LITERATURE AND REAL LIFE.

[Not before published. Written in 1862.]

UPON

THE INFLUENCE OF LOVE

UPON

LITERATURE AND REAL LIFE.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a spot of dressed ground, a little apart from the more formal gardens attached to my old country-house, that seems especially to please any poet or artist who may chance to grace my home with his presence.

After quitting terraces stiff with statues in measured rows and parterres in geometrical symmetry, a path, skirting one side of an old-fashioned bowling-green, winds under an arch formed artificially by the trunks of large pollard-trees covered with ivy. From the mouth of this arch a view breaks upon the eye with that pleasing effect which belongs to what some describer of landscape scenery calls "The art of gardenesque surprise."

For the place seems almost as if it had been dis-

buried — as if it belonged to another age, and had been the haunt of another race. Nature, I must own, has not done much for it; and the art to which it owes the effect produced is far from being either very pure in itself or very liberal in the recourse to costly accessories. Originally it was but a miniature valley of level turf filched from the park, with a little pond and a few ancient oak-trees. But it so happened that, some winters ago, I had taken to a passionate study of Horace, and was meditating a version of his Odes upon what I flattered myself was a new principle in the translation of Latin lyrics. I had a bust of the poet made in terra-cotta, taken from the engraving of an antique gem; and this bust originated the decoration of the ground I now so complacently describe. For when I had got it, I found I did not know where to place it. A friend said to me, "Place it near the little pond, close by the pine-grove." "But," I answered pettishly, "nothing there is in character with the classic age!" "True," said my friend; "but the spot at least will be out of sight of your Gothic turrets and your mediæval terraces; and since there is nothing to unmake, we can surely make out of turf and water something in character with any age you select. Give me your general idea — leave the details to me. We will invent an Horatian Garden." "Excellent!" cried I, with enthusiasm. "We cannot, indeed, make a garden in the least resembling any in which Horace wandered, whether in his Sabine

valley or amid the orchards of Tivoli; but I shall be amply contented if we can humour the rough ground into a spot not unfittingly hallowed to his memory by a descendant of the barbarian whom, in prophetic rapture, he promised after death to visit; a resting-place for the glorious singing-bird — *canorus ales* — when, in flights uncircumscribed by Stygian wave, winging way to Dacian and Scyth, and drinkers of the Rhone,* he swerves aside to hear us murmur his melodious warbles in the isle of the Father-Celt."

So my friend and I set to work. I suggested the designs; he seized their idea with the quickness of a man of poetic taste and practical knowledge of picturesque effect; and, thanks to him, we have made a sort of scenery which, viewed indulgently — as visitors view what their host shows them with an air of triumph — is always called classical by those who have never studied the classics, and by those who have studied them is admitted, with a gracious smile, to be pretty and original. The poor little pond, alas! resembles no Bandusian fountain; but we have so curved its grassy banks, that, by a stretch of fancy, one might suppose it some quiet pool formed, through subterranean springs, by the babbling rivulet. Near the margin, to the left, extends a rude sort of grotto, which by courtesy may be called

* Horat. lib. II. Ode XX.

Dionæan. At all events, it is guarded by a statue of Dione, copied from that charming image of the goddess called the Venus of Ostia. Though, in the recesses of this grotto — which is formed of mossed roots, and the trunks of trees that had perhaps come to their prime before Horace was known in England — there be no beds of roses, such as those on which a Pyrrha reclined; yet still the rose itself, in many a living cluster, wreathes its blooms round the sylvan columns. On the opposite bank of this honoured pool there runs a trellice for vines in the way vines are still trained in Italy. On the farther side of the grotto is a stiff yew-hedge, belting an alley of sward, and relieved by the busts of those whose immortal names come to our lips when we think of Horace; — Augustus, Mæcenas, Brutus, Virgil. Niches formed by the yews hold statues symbolical of the Rural Muse and Urban Muse, Horace being an equal favourite with both. Under the Rural Muse, who is crowned with flowers, are inscribed these lines: —

> "The Muse of Rural Life, I link the races.
> Nature renews her seasons with my Mays;
> To thee the lark sings as it sung to Horace,
> And here, as in Ustica, Horace sings."

The statue of the Urban Muse, who bears in her hand a lamp, takes also an inscription, which runs thus: —

"The Muse of Social Life, I link the races.
Clear through the night of time, the lamp I bear
Shows man as man was ever! thy last poet
Is not so modern as my Horace is."

Farther on, is a statue of Diana, standing out from a semicircular fane of rustic pillars; a few yards beyond, an antique marble image of Faunus, which I was fortunate enough to find in Tuscany, and which artists opine to be of the age of Phidias. The same artists tell me it ought not to be left exposed to the rains and frosts of our climate; probably they are right. But Horace sacrificed to Faunus; I sacrifice Faunus to Horace. Within a nook, *in remoto gramine*, is the bust of Horace himself, under which are engraved these rhymeless verses, in a poor attempt at an English adaptation of Horace's favourite Alcaic metre, humouring the metre so that in English it could be really lyrical — that is, sung to simple string-instruments in a tripping sort of measure: —

"Vowed to thee whom the chorus of wood-nymph and satyr
Lured apart from the crowd, be this shade and still water,
And the grot that admits of the rose,
But is safe, thank the gods, from a Pyrrha!

Vowed to thee be the respite to-day may afford us
From cares hid as yet out of sight in the morrow,
While the wind and the wave are at peace,
And the ash is as calm as the cypress.

Rightly called, leave thy haunts in the old Sabine valley,
Hither, as to Lucretilis, charm lively Faunus;
Let us dream that we hear by thy side
His reed echoed back from Ustica."

I spare the reader the tædium of further description: I have said enough to give a general idea of the place. But no doubt its chief attraction is that which it is scarcely possible to describe — an air of seclusion and remoteness; it is so enclosed and shut out from the landscape round it by sloping grass mounds or thickly planted trees; it seems so distinct from the habitation to which it is nevertheless so near; it is so unlike the usual imitations of classic gardens, and yet in each detail it so suggests a likeness to bits of scenic effect in Pompeian frescoes, that wherever its quaint strangeness is familiarised by a vague reminiscence, the reminiscence is like that of a dream, and a dream of the bygone sensuous heathen life.

Here, sometimes, in summer noons, we shun the dog-star, spread the turf with such light refection of fresh fruits and cooling wines as suit time and place; and though we crown not our brows with floral wreaths, nor anoint ourselves with Malobathran balms, we talk of men and things much, I daresay, as the ancients did in their hours of holiday. If, by happy chance, the party boast of some tuneful voice or sprightly lute, I look towards the still image of

Faunus, and imagine I am listening to the song of Tyndaris.

Hither, too, when conversing with some wiser visitor on themes that disport round the borders of philosophy, instinctively I direct his steps. Many a golden hour have I thus spent, gathering in food for after-meditation, when left alone with thought and memory.

In the place thus described, and seated near the cool shade which the arches of the grotto and the boughs of neighbouring trees throw over the sward, during one of those English July noons, when the sun is too powerful for active exercise, and yet the sky so pure, and Nature so attractive, that it seems a waste of life to seek occupation within doors, I found myself, not long since, between two friends, who had come with me from London the day before. I will designate these guests by the names of Metellus and Gallus: pardon the affectation, seeming or real, of classic names in connection with a spot devoted to classic association.

Metellus is a man of high birth and large fortune, of mature years, and stored with rich acquisitions both from books and experience of mankind. He enjoys in the world a dignified and solid reputation. His talk is full of matter, sometimes adorned by eloquence, sometimes relieved by subdued and quiet irony, though perhaps too much overlaid with a learning which even the ease of his manner does

not entirely divest from an appearance of pedantry — I say appearance, for, in reality, no man is less of a pedant. He is fond of subjects that invite argumentative discussion, but he is much more good-tempered under contradiction than the lovers of disputation generally are. It is natural to the serene loftiness of his character to be invariably urbane and well-bred. He has been, and indeed still is, singularly handsome, a great favourite with ladies — especially with ladies who cultivate their minds; but he has never married, although he recommends marriage earnestly to all his bachelor friends, and considers himself in his solitary lot a warning, not an example. And hence the name herein assigned to him is suggested by that of the Roman Censor, Metellus, who made a memorable speech, which was extremely discouraging to those ideas of wedlock which lovers usually cherish, but nevertheless extremely urgent in commendation of wedlock, as one of the dangerous but honourable duties which a brave man should not decline to fulfil.

Metellus, when pressed to practise what he preaches, says, "Age is exonerated from the perils that belong to youth; I am too old for marriage." I know many young ladies who do not consider him too old for them. He is forty-five. It is only when friendship advises, or beauty tempts, him to marry, that he affects to be eighty. Gallus is the younger son of a small country squire. He has his way to make in

life. He is nominally destined for the bar, and has talent enough to win his way even in that overcrowded profession; but at present, though now in his twenty-fifth year, he continues to indulge a boyish passion for romance and poetry, which it is proverbially difficult to reconcile with a sedulous devotion to Themis. He has not yet published anything in his own name, but he is suspected to be the author of sundry pieces in prose and verse, which have appeared anonymously in popular periodicals, and attracted much favourable notice. Such small poems (chiefly love poems, not unnaturally at twenty-five) as I know to be his, having been allowed to see them in MS., are full of promise; they have fervour and passion, and an original hardihood of form. Some day or other, if the strong current of practical life do not draw him into its vortex, I predict that he will disappoint his parents and delight the public as a poet professed.

Some of my readers will now see why I give to my young friend the name of Gallus, a Latin poet as well as orator, whose genius we take somewhat on trust, for we have no remains either of his poems or his orations; but some critics have assigned to him — though not, alas! upon authority allowed by finer judges — one of the most charming hymns in homage to love which the Roman Muse has bequeathed to us.

Gallus is small in stature and delicately formed,

with irregular mobile features lit up by animation, and gaining a beauty of their own from an expression of countenance that strikes and interests at the first glance; for it is at once thoughtful and hopeful — a rare combination. His eye in repose looks upward; his lips in silence part slightly, with a sanguine haughty smile; his hair, which at any quick movement of his head he flings back from his temples, is luxuriant with careless curls of a chesnut brown — catching a golden tinge when a sunbeam falls on them. He has not lived much in the great world, and his manners have not the polish which graces the bearing of Metellus. As his character is proud, impetuous, unhesitatingly fearless, so his manner is abrupt, decisive — sometimes rude. He is gentle indeed to women, to children, to inferiors; but he holds servility in such disdain that he lacks the due respect which youth is taught to pay to men of high station or established repute. In short, he is not without that arrogance of bearing which is common enough in young men of great power and daring spirit, who, ere they have won deference for themselves, do not comprehend the deference which society pays to others. The same men become gracious when they become great. For, with all but the vulgar and malevolent, courtesy grows out of the consciousness of undisputed station. I need scarcely say that Gallus has made many enemies, because he has wounded many self-loves: and if his talents are ex-

tolled by the young, they meet with little encouragement from the old. Still, to those who know him well, there is in his nature so much manly generosity and impulsive nobleness, so vivid a warmth of heart, so chivalrous a sense of honour, and such deeps of latent tenderness and sweetness, that, though the enmities he creates are keen and stubborn, the friendships he inspires are profound and lasting. Metellus, who is the most tolerant of sages and the most affable of grandees, holds Gallus in great affection, and likes him, I believe, the better because he is the only very young man whom the reputation of Metellus does not a little awe.

Now, as we were thus seated, or rather indolently stretched upon the grass, talking on subjects started by the sight of the Roman busts — of which we caught a sidelong view down the shaded alley in which they rest on their pedestals; and *à propos* of some quotation which Gallus made from Ovid, Metellus threw out a remark upon the tendency of poets to exaggerate the influence of love upon human destinies. This called forth from Gallus a contradiction so blunt and brisk, that I said, rebukingly, "Fie, Gallus! suffer me to hear, without interruption, the opinions of Metellus upon a subject in which it may be supposed that his experience is larger and his philosophy deeper than yours. You, *gracilis puer*, have scarcely yet met with your first Pyrrha, and Metellus has, I dare be sworn, hung more than a

dozen votive tablets in Neptune's temple, commemorating escape from a dozen shipwrecks."

"Nay," quoth Metellus, "you should be the last man to chide Gallus for having unwittingly saved you from one of those inflictions which authors dread the most. You must know that I brought with me to your house the manuscript of a couple of essays, or rather of one essay under two divisions, on which I meditated asking your opinion, in some propitious hour lazy as the present. Knowing, too, that Gallus sets up for a critic, I should also have pressed him into the council. To let you into a secret, I have the manuscript at this moment in my pocket; and I had an artful design, in the remarks which Gallus has so passionately contradicted, to sound my way, and see how far I could expect to find in both of you friendly or hostile listeners for the lucubration I wished to read to you; but Gallus has so honestly shown what I should expect from his judgment, that I think it prudent not to hazard a similar reception from yourself. I shall return with my manuscript unrevealed.

"Not so!" cried I; "punish me not for Gallus's offence of taste and good manners. Read the manuscript to me exclusively; let Gallus penitentially withdraw, and initiate his lips into the discipline of silence by betaking himself to fishing."

"On the contrary," said Metellus, "if I should yield to the ami ble solicitations I have insidiously

provoked, it must be on the express stipulation that Gallus shall have full liberty to stay and reply, provided only, but provided always, that he enter into a solemn engagement not to interrupt me in the course of my argument even by a groan. I will observe a similar forbearance towards himself when it comes to his turn to be tedious."

"Agreed," said Gallus; "I accept the challenge. It will be practice for the bar, if ever I get a brief."

Metellus, after modestly warning me that he had contrived out of a very exciting subject to make a dissertation so sober, that I might find it equally tame and tedious, drew forth a very neat-looking manuscript, and began to read in a pleasant voice, attuned to the familiar key of conversation, the essay which he has permitted me to submit herein to a wider audience.

LOVE, IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON LITERATURE.

METELLUS.

"The passion of love forms the prevalent theme of imaginative literature; and to three parts of that literature is the Be-all and End-all. When the Muse enters the realm of fiction, Love greets her at the threshold; and while she remains in Fable-Land, this image so absorbs her attention that she recites its attributes and describes its form, to mortals in the hard world of reality, with as much minuteness as if she were communicating to her listeners the discovery of something they could never of themselves experience; or, on the other hand, favouring them with critical suggestions for the improvement of an art on which their livelihood depended. Yet the fact is — firstly, that most of us know more about Love than the Muse can tell us; and, secondly, that with very few of us does Love hold more than a restrained and subordinate rank in that social life in which the Muse represents him as the indisputable universal utocrat.

Strange to say, it is that class of imaginative literature which professes to represent to us, with the most careful fidelity, the picture of this actual world in which we cultivate our acres, ply our looms, litigate and fight, talk, think, act — anything but love — for at least nine-tenths of the long interval between the registry of our births and the epitaphs on our tombs; — strange to say, it is that class of literature which, with the most uniform and audacious impudence, converts all this vast panorama of being into the mere background for the same naked little Cupid with the same silly little bow.

If any class of imaginative literature should give us some truthful picture of life as it really is, we might surely look for it in the Novel that professes to delineate our everyday manners, or in the Comedy that affects to hold up the mirror to our humours, and light us to self-knowledge by a smile. Yet the novel and the comedy, in proportion as they pretend to be orthodox novel and comedy, are precisely the works in which the whole action of life is most commonly reduced to the machinery of a love-plot, and its span contracted to the vicissitudes of an amorous courtship. Nay, the moment it is understood that the hero and heroine are to be married, the author seems to think that the whole end for which they were created is fulfilled; and as the Provençal housewife, when the silk-worms she has warmed in her bosom turn into white moths, does not allow them to

flutter out their brief being amidst the sunshine, in return for all the silk they have spun her, but consigns them at once to the craws of her poultry, so, when the lovers get out of the entanglements which they weave around themselves, and we say, "Now let us see how they sport on the wing," the author terminates their existence, and dismisses them to be digested by the critics.

It is also worthy of notice, that, though we of the North might not unreasonably be supposed to have a far more vivid conception of all that constitutes the poetry of love than the nations of the East, in which, since women are secluded in harems, there seems small comparative scope for the adventures of courtship, and the delicacies of chivalrous sentiment — yet critical authorities are now pretty well agreed that we must look to the East for the origin of that erotic literature which we so proudly regard as indigenous to our own native soil. The Anglo-Saxon poets, when indulging in gentler strains than those dedicated to warlike deeds and adventures, delighted either in moral allegories, such as the 'Hymn to the Phœnix,' which mysteriously illustrates the destinies of the soul, or in 'Monitory Poems,' which (as we may see in Mr. Wright's popular and pleasant pages*) seem to have warned the listeners less of the torments

* 'History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages,' p. 38.

of love than of the dangers engendered by beer. And towards the close of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy, the holiness of chastity in contrast to the errors of passion becomes the chosen theme of the austere fabulist and moralising glee-man.

The Scandinavian Scalds, among whom the fierce creed of Odin was in force to a later date than it retained in the muse of the Anglo-Saxons, are of a sterner and darker character. Their mysteries are not refined to the spiritual types of Christianity, but are grim with the spells of witches riding along the sea on the backs of wolves; not the ragged and mumbling crones of Anglo-Saxon superstition, but incarnate Powers of no earth-born race. The witches of Macbeth are purely Scandinavian; and Shakspeare must have found his conception of their grand and terrible attributes among the Danish part of our population. So also the Danish battle-songs are more intensely ferocious than the Anglo-Saxon. They seem composed in the intoxication of wine literally drunk out of the skulls of foes. And even where Love is admitted, less as the prime agent of mortal life than as one among its disturbing and fatal influences, it is certainly unlike the Love whose "footsteps are to be traced by the blossoms it lets fall."* The Scandinavian Venus is a grisly giantess, who, in the language of the 'Edda,' "rides to the battle, and hath one-half of the slain."

* Schiller.

Neither is the genuine Welsh Poetry, before it was adulterated, by the romances of Brittany, with chivalrous legends of Lancelot and Guenever, more erotic than that of our Danish and Saxon forefathers. The original Bardism appears to have been employed as the organ of that which the Druids, who dictated its teachings, declared to be TRUTH: ethical doctrines in laconic forms; adages and proverbs. The next era in Welsh poetry is identified with the enchanter Merlin. This mysterious personage, according to national tradition, was a mathematician. His poetry is not extant, but, if it resembled his architecture (he is said to have built Stonehenge), it could scarcely have been a bower for the Loves to nestle in. Aneurin and Taliessin are warlike and patriotic. In their time of stern struggle and sorrow there could have been little leisure for courtship. Somewhat later, Merdyn the Wild predicts the woes to befall his race in melancholy stanzas addressed, not to his lady, but — his pig.* In 'Owen and his Ravens' (published in the 'Mabinogion'), which appears to me the most ancient of all the Welsh narrative myths, Fancy invents a fable without the slightest assistance from Love.

"Gallantry," observes Mr. Hallam, "in the sense of a general homage to the fair, a respectful defer-

* See an excellent article in the 'Quarterly Review,' 'On the Welsh and their Literature,' vol. cix. p. 38.

ence to woman independent of personal attachment, seems to have first become a perceptible element of European manners in the south of France, and probably not later than the end of the tenth century; it was not at all in unison with the rough habits of the Carlovingian Franks, or of the Anglo-Saxons. There is little, or, as far as I know, nothing of it in the poem of Beowulf, or in that upon Attila, or in the oldest Teutonic fragments, or in the Niebelungen Lied. Love may appear as a natural passion, but not as a conventional idolatry."* But when the Crusaders returned from the East, and when the Moors had settled in Spain, a new spirit was breathed into the old genius of the North. Love, alike in the extravagance of its passion and the gallantry of its sentiment, inspired the lays of the Troubadour; and erotic Romance, heightened by additional spells on the fancy, in legendary fables of Oriental enchantment accommodated to Christian manners by French imitators, came to our island as a stranger, to settle as a native, like its Norman patrons. Then the Cymrian bards tune their harps to light airs never known to the Druids; the amorous court of King Arthur supersedes the myths of Hu-Gadarn and the hazy traditions of Defrobani; and, towards the close of the thirteenth century, Dafyd-ab-Gwylim gives an Ovid to Wales. Then the Anglo-Saxon

* Hallam: 'Literature of Europe,' part i. c. ii. p. 127.

transfers his metaphysical tendency from mystic Allegory to the refining subtleties and dainty conceits which are bred from Fancy when it broods on Passion. Then, in our northern provinces, where (as Palgrave has so lucidly shown) the population was almost wholly of Danish origin, sprang up the Border Minstrelsy, in which the hardy Scandinavian genius yields, though not without retaining the honours of war, to its soft invader. In the legends of Scandinavia proper, Love also now begins to assume a more mild and benignant aspect than he did under the auspices of the earlier Freya.

However remote, however unborrowed from similar European legends, may be the origin of some of the 'Norse Tales' recently familiarised to English readers by the masterly translation of Mr. Dasent—most of those in which Love plays an important part appear to me of comparatively recent adaptation from foreign myths.

It is amusing to see, in the Norse story 'East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon,' the legend of Cupid and Psyche stripped of its Hellenic elegance, and reduced to the homely taste of Scandinavian listeners. Instead of the drop which trickles from the lamp as the Greek Psyche bends over the sleeping god, it is three drops from a tallow candle which the Norse Psyche lets fall upon the shirt of the beautiful prince, whom she had married as a white bear; and for

dénouement of the story, the Bride washes the spots out of the shirt.

Still there is a warm, household, human interest in the Norse Psyche, which in some degree compensates for her deficiency in the poetic grace which beautifies and exalts the Hellenic. But whether the Scandinavian myth be borrowed second-hand from the story of Apuleius — which was among the earliest classic works the invention of printing familiarised to scholars — or whether, as Mr. Dasent (according to the theory for which he argues in his learned and eloquent introduction) would probably contend, it came down to the Scandinavian races from remote originals, common alike to Greek and to Norseman — it has equally its source in Asiatic Fable.

Nor is it only in the poetry of modern Europe that the chaste Camænæ have been corrupted into wanton singing-girls by intercourse with the amorous East.

Those Hellenic legends, in which Love plays much the same part that he does in the fantastic literature of chivalry — such as the stories of Bellerophon, of Perseus, of the Colchian enchantress Medea — are clearly of Asiatic origin. It is true that Homer avails himself largely of the agency of Love; but, setting aside all such reasons as have been urged by critical scholars for believing that Homer was himself Asiatic by origin, or was largely indebted to Asiatic poets, whose names and works

are lost to us, Homer does not represent lovemaking as that main occupation of the human race, to which poetry, as the voice of the human heart, should modulate all its keys. He is not like those later rhapsodists in verse or in prose, whose birds only sing in the season of coupling. Though the siege of Troy has its origin in the elopement or rape of Helen, and though Achilles retires to his tents on being unjustly deprived of Briseis, still the entire poem is not devoted to the guilt, the sorrows, or the wrongs of those immortal lovers. Though the wrath of Achilles is "the direful spring of woes unnumbered," Briseis, that fair cause of his wrath, is very much kept in the background. We hear more of the hero's friend than we do of his mistress; and it is the fate of his friend and not of his mistress that exercises over his actions the potential effect which makes him, as the destroyer of Hector, the prominent hero of the Epic.

In the adventures of Ulysses the fascinations of Circe form but an episode; and that hero, the first in whom intellect is made more prominent than valour, grieves more for the death of his dog Argus, than he does for his separation from the Crystal Queen of the Sea.

The example of Homer, even to the limited degree in which he sought materials of interest in amorous narrative, does not appear to have been readily adopted in those states of Greece wherein

we look for the purer developments of the Hellenic genius. Though we are told that Homer was really the parent of Athenian tragedy, and though the Athenian tragic poets took their favourite characters from his Epic, yet certainly neither Æschylus nor Sophocles selects from Homer those passages which would best furnish a modern dramatist with pathetic love-plots. Æschylus only exhibits the form of love in order to punish its crimes; Sophocles, it is true, calls forth our tears for Hæmon and Antigone; but still their love is expressed with austere reserve, and our pity for the death of Hæmon is left subordinate to our awe of the retribution which it inflicts on the cruelty of Creon.

If we are to find among the Dorians the earliest and purest type of the Hellenic mind, we cannot suppose that, in those Dorian states which preserved the longest their ethnical idiosyncrasies, the Muses were the handmaids of Aphroditè. Crete, which exhibits the most primitive development of the true Dorian character, and to which Müller assigns the origin of the religious poetry and music of the Doric race,* has left us one of its popular chants, dating from a very remote antiquity. Of this song, justly admired by scholars, I will cite a spirited translation by the late Sir D. K. Sandford, which may at least serve to show how little the Cretan Mars was subdued by a Cretan Venus.

* Müller's 'Dorians,' Oxford translation, vol. II. p. 343.

THE SONG OF HYBRIAS THE CRETAN.

"My wealth is here — the sword, the spear, the breast-defending shield;
With this I plough, with this I sow, with this I reap the field,
With this I tread the luscious grape and drink the blood-red wine!
And slaves around in order wait, and all are counted mine.

But he that will not rear the lance upon the battle-field,
Nor sway the sword, nor stand behind the breast-defending shield,
On lowly knee must worship me, with servile kiss adored,
And peal the cry of homage high, and hail me mighty lord."

The Spartans, in whom we recognise the most illustrious representatives of the Doric race, were little likely to adapt to amorous madrigals their national music, "which," saith their erudite and eulogistic historian (Müller), "was calculated to strengthen the mind against the attacks of passion." Their soil did not grow love-singers; when they wanted one, they borrowed him. Alcman was by birth a Lydian of Sardis: brought very young into Laconia as a slave, his master discovered his genius, and emancipated him; and among his poems, of which but fragments remain, there were many devoted to love, by no means "calculated to strengthen

the mind against the attacks of passion." But he seems to have been as ardently addicted to eating and drinking as he was to love. Enough of his verse remains to show that he was fond of confectionary, and enjoyed an excellent digestion. Indeed, he boasts of deserving the epithet "voracious." Nevertheless, the solemn Spartans not only delighted in this jovial sensualist, but were anxious to appropriate to their land the honour of producing him. The Sardian slave was naturalised, and styled emphatically "the Laconian Poet." Müller, who accommodates his great learning, and still greater intellect, to his systematic desire of dignifying the Spartan genius somewhat overmuch at the expense of the Athenian, though allowing, indeed, that Alcman was of Lydian origin, decides with a curtness altogether Laconian against the judgment of most of the best authorities, "corroborated incidentally," says Colonel Mure, very truly, "by Alcman himself," that Sparta had really produced this classical minnesinger, to whom, so far as we know, not one attribute generical to Spartan character can be assigned.

But how reconcile the Lydian's poetry to the Spartan's taste? Colonel Mure, a man of the world as well as a scholar, which is more likely to be the case with an English colonel than a German professor, suggests that the Spartans probably enjoyed on the sly much which they sanctimoniously rebuked

in public. Says the Colonel, speaking out like a man who has equally known the discipline of a drill and the social ease of a mess-table, "From all this it would appear that the ascetic contempt for sensual indulgence, on which the Spartans afterwards prided themselves, had not yet been fully matured; or that the legislative rigour of their public morality was compatible, in the days of Alcman, with much freedom of social habits."* Not only in the days of Alcman, but I suspect as long as Sparta was Sparta! A people constitutionally grave like the relief of a pleasantry. No people at this day are more sincerely and more seriously moral than the Scotch, and no people on this earth more frankly relish a joke; if the joke be good, not the less because it is broad. The why is sufficiently clear — a grave people is haughty. According to Hobbes, the source of laughter must be sought in the sense of superiority. The grave, therefore, laugh at the levities to which they feel themselves superior, and the gravest nations will always have the liveliest sense of humour. If there be a nation in Europe in modern days graver than the British, it is the Spanish; and the only nation in Europe that equals, and perhaps excels, the British in luxuriance of humour (witness Quevedo, Cervantes, and indeed the popular language, stuffed full with humorous proverbs), is the Spanish.

* Mure's 'Critical History of the Language and Literature of Ancient Greece,' vol. III. p. 201 (on Alcman).

But if, in spite of his cognomen as the "Laconian poet," Alcman was no native of Sparta, I am inclined to assign to that commonwealth of soldiers the soldierly poet, far more akin to its national character; and, to judge by the fragments extant, of far higher worth in himself both as poet and man; I believe that Tyrtæus was really the son of "rocky Laconia." We may dismiss, with approval of all the best recent critics, English and German, the myth that Tyrtæus was a lame schoolmaster at Aphidnæ in Attica. His progenitors might very probably belong to Aphidnæ (with which Sparta had connection); but it seems to me impossible to read what remains of Tyrtæus himself, and not come to the conclusion that verses so ardently patriotic, and so impressed with the special attributes of the Spartan character, must have been composed by a born Lacedæmonian.* But Tyrtæus tells us to look for human beauty on the face, not of the living mistress, but of the youth who has died for his native land.

Alcæus, Anacreon, Sappho, among the earlier Greek poets, were sufficiently erotic; but they were natives of lands coloured by Oriental skies, and they had the Asiatic temperament if they had the Hellenic genius.

* See an able article on Tyrtæus, summing up with great fairness the pros and cons of his Laconian origin, in Dr. Smith's 'Dictionary of Grecian and Roman Biography and Mythology.'

If we look to Athens as representing the most purely European type of the poetic and intellectual development of Greece, it is not till the Athenians passed under the influence of the East — not till the generation succeeding the men who had fought at Marathon had acquired familiar acquaintance with Oriental modes of thought, and the Hetæræ, adventurous ladies chiefly from the colonies of Asia Minor, had risen into a power amidst the social circles of grey philosophy, as well as of youthful fashion — that Love began to take an authority in classic fiction akin to that which he now usurps in the modern.

With Euripides commences the important distinction, in the analysis of which all the most refined and intellectual of modern erotic literature consists — viz., the distinction between love as a passion and love as a sentiment. Even in Sappho, love is but a vehement emotion of the heart or the senses — with Euripides it is something more; it is an occupation of the intellect — it is a mystery to fathom — a problem to solve. Love with him not only feels, but it reasons — reasons perhaps overmuch. Be that as it may, he is the first of the Hellenic poets who interests us *intellectually* in the antagonism and affinity between the sexes. He seems to have made a study of woman. Nor is it true (as has often been inconsiderately said) that he libels what he had studied. It is the height of assurance in Aristophanes

to prefer that charge specially against him in a comedy that comprises the most truculent satire against the sex. Indeed, not our own wittiest woman-hater, Swift himself, has offered insults so gross to the dignity of woman, so barbarously caricatured the ideal likeness in which she is limned by the Muse, so foully bespattered the charmed veil in which she is half concealed by the Grace, as has been done by the accuser of Euripides in the riotous sport of his mighty and merciless genius. Euripides presents to us in Alcestis the loveliest ideal of womanly devotion, though he also presents to us in Medea a picture of the fiend to which jealousy converts a woman. Still he is careful to preserve, even to Medea, all her human excuses, and to leave her a grandeur which flatters her sex, in spite of the tragic atrocities with which she avenges her wrongs upon ours. This, in fact, is the compliment that Euripides pays to women; and for this, in his own age, he was probably the most blamed — viz., that he is the first poet who lifts woman up to an intellectual equality with man; nay, indeed, sometimes assigns to her intellectually the superior rank, whether for good or for evil. Beside Medea, Jason is a miserable wretch, who excuses his infidelity by the paltriest motives. He could not do a better worldly thing, being an exile, than marry a king's daughter! — it would be so good for the children! — they could be so much better educated! He disowns

every kind of passion — he has no hate for Medea, no love for another. He hints that it would be a great blessing if men could be born without any help from women at all (an idea which Shakspeare, Milton, and Sir Thomas Browne have very eloquently re-echoed); and declares that Medea would not censure him for so prudent a mode of getting on in the world if she were not a woman — but all women are so unreasonable! Certainly here Jason is not heroic — Medea is. So, in the 'Alcestis,' the woman plays a much sublimer part than the man. Alcestis, a chaste and charming wife, yields herself to Death in order to save the life of her husband. Such a wife might reconcile Shakspeare, Milton, and even Sir Thomas Browne, to the dispensation of Providence, who did create

> "This fair defect
> Of Nature; and not fill the world at first
> With men, as angels, without feminine."*

Accordingly, Death carries off Alcestis. Her husband, Admetus, mourns for her, deeply, tenderly; but still he accepts the sacrifice, and consoles himself by accusing his father, in the rudest terms, for not having saved his daughter-in-law by offering himself to Death. An argument thereon ensues, in which his father has much the best of it. In short, in these

* Milton.

two dramas we have woman's love at its best and its worst; in both, the woman is exceedingly grand, and in both the man is exceedingly vulgar.

Being a man myself, I venture humbly to doubt whether, in this contrast, Euripides has rendered to his own sex impartial justice; but I do not doubt that, in the dignity with which, be she good or bad, woman is here invested, Euripides revolutionised the character of all previous love-poetry — represented a highly civilized age, in which woman had become extremely accomplished; and that in this we must trace the main reason why, though inferior to Æschylus and Sophocles as a poet, Euripides has exercised, and ever will exercise, a much more immediate influence over the dramatic literature of civilized nations. In Æschylus speak the Demigods — in Sophocles speak the Greeks. Euripides, amidst many philosophical pedantries, many political impertinences, — amidst much that is positively anti-poetic, still, with the beat of a heart that had known great sorrows, with the thought of a brain informed by magnificent teachers, represents civilized man and civilized woman in all lands and in all ages — passionate in the midst of reason — reasoning in the midst of passion. And hence, perhaps, it was that the Delphian oracle said, "wise Æschylus, wiser Sophocles, wisest Euripides!" Wisest he certainly was, because he dealt most with humanity; beyond humanity no human wisdom can reach. Above it we

may soar, but not through wisdom; solely through that which every child comprehends in his heart. The influence which Love had thus acquired on the tragic stage, soon became yet more familiarly visible on the comic.

A Menander was the inevitable consequence of an Euripides. And, to judge of the effect which this amiable but troublesome deity had by that time attained in Athenian society, we must look, not, alas! to Menander himself — for of him only fragments remain — but to that politest of the Latin poets, in whom modern comedy acknowledges its most popular model, and who is styled by Cicero "Menander's interpreter" — viz. TERENCE.

That author has, no doubt, exercised his discretion in altering, not always, perhaps, for the better, the plots of Menander and Apollodorus; but he has left unchanged the passions and the manners transferred from the Greek originals. His comedies, without a single exception, turn upon love. Love is made the great business of the young man's life. He feels its power with far more intensity, and far more devotion of faith, than the heroes of Congreve, Farquhar, or even Sheridan. Pamphilus, in the 'Andrian,' will not desert Glycerium, "though he make all mankind his foes." "Farewell those," he exclaims, "who would put us asunder. Death, only death shall part us."* When he learns that Glycerium

* 'And.' act IV. scene 2.

is an Athenian citizen, and that his marriage with her is sanctioned and legitimate, he exclaims, in that true and earnest poetry of passion which demands extravagance of expression to express extravagance of emotion — "that as the eternity of the gods is proved by the permanence of their joys, my soul hath its content so absolute, that I too am immortal!"*

Nothing in the modern drama is more impassioned than Phædria's parting admonition to Thais: —

"All night and day love me, still long for me;
Dream, ponder still of me; wish, hope for me,
Delight in me; be all in all with me.
Give your whole heart for mine — all yours to me." **

I avail myself of Colman's translation, but it does not do justice to the strength of the closing line: —

"Meus fac sis postremo animus, quando ego sum tuus."

The excess of passion in the Greek original, Terence

* 'And.' act v. scene 5. This passage is taken from the 'Eunuch' of Menander, and transferred by Terence to the 'Andrian' by the same author. — Donatus. In the text I have borrowed from Colman's translation, in which he elegantly adapts a line from Othello to his version of the passionate burst, "Nam mihi immortalitas parta 'st."

** 'Eun.' act i. scene 1.

has sometimes tamed to the more sober taste of his Roman audience. Thus, in the Adelphi (act II. scene 5), Ctesipho, being crossed in love, would fly his country. In Menander, the lover was about to destroy himself.

The contrast between love pure and faithful, and love transient and mercenary, is exquisitely sketched by Bacchis, the Hetæra, to the modest and charming Antiphila * —

"*Bacchis.* Our gallants,
Charmed by our beauty, court us but for that,
Which fading, they transfer their love to others.
If then, meanwhile, we look not to ourselves,
We live forlorn, deserted, and distressed;
You, when you've once agreed to pass your life
Bound to one man whose temper suits with yours,
He, too, attaches his whole heart to you.
Thus mutual friendship draws you each to each;
Nothing can part you — nothing shake your love.
Antiphila. — I know not others. For myself I know
From his content I ever drew my own." — COLMAN.

In the very remarkable play of the 'Stepmother,' which appears to have been, yet more rigidly and verbally than the other Latin comedies quoted, a copy from the Greek, the whole passion is entirely domestic, resting solely between husband and wife. And the generosity of the husband, who conceals,

* 'Heautont.' act II. scene 3.

from pity and affection and a consciousness of his own earlier wrongs to his wife, an apparent disgrace that she has brought on him, and prefers rather to seem himself to blame, creates a situation of pure sentiment not exceeded by any on the German stage.

The more ancient developments of the Latin Muse, apart from the stage, when unborrowed from the Greek, were certainly not exhibited in narratives of love. Neither Ennius nor Lucretius is a love poet; and though the last has a beautiful and glowing invocation to Venus, it occupies but a small number of verses compared with those no less elaborate which he devotes to a description of the Plague.

Plautus borrows less from the Greek than Terence, and his love-plots are more coarsely humorous. They express a good deal of noisy headstrong animal passion, but rarely exhibit the grace and tenderness of sentiment which is to be found in his rival. Indeed the comedy in which he most invests human affection with the heroic dignity of devotion and self-sacrifice ('The Captives'), is the only one of his extant comedies in which no woman at all is introduced. The affection described, and which forms his plot, is that of a slave who perils himself to effect the liberty of his master.

Just before the outbreak of the civil wars by which the Roman Republic was destroyed, when manners had acquired a voluptuous softness, when

Julius Cæsar and Clodius had made their *bonnes fortunes* the town talk, and Flora, a wanton more cynical than Lais, boasted that she had left the mark of her teeth among the scars of the majestic Pompey, we perceive in Catullus that Love was beginning to aspire to that insolent pre-eminence which he obtained somewhat later in the verse of Tibullus, Ovid, and Propertius. With Propertius, indeed, Love is all in all.

"Non hæc Calliope, non hæc mihi cantat Apollo,
'Ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit."

"These songs inspire not Phœbus nor Calliope;
The girl I sing, herself creates the singer!"
PROPERT. lib. I. el. 1.

And, again, what intense and absolute devotion in the following lines! —

"Tu mihi sola domus, tu, Cynthia, sola parentes,
Omnia tu nostræ tempora lætitiæ.
Seu tristis veniam, seu contra lætus amicis
Quidquid ero, — dicam 'Cynthia causa fuit!'"

"To me, home, kindred, thou — thou only art!
Cynthia, in thee all joy's returning seasons;
Grieving or glad, whate'er I henceforth be,
If asked the cause, take 'Cynthia' for the answer."

With Virgil, however, Love is only one power amongst many. The passion of Dido has but little

influence on the fortunes of Æneas. Horace, the wisest of the Latin poets — the one in whom knowledge of civilized life is perhaps, indeed, more conspicuously displayed than in any lyrical poet in any language — Horace evidently regards love as the relaxation and not as the business of mortal existence; and it is difficult to believe that he ever passed through any serious or absorbing emotion in all his alleged flirtations with Glycera, Lydia, or Chloe. A very affectionate man, he is said to have died of grief, not for the perfidies of Pyrrha, but for the loss of Mæcenas.

In the later poets of the empire, love appears to have passed into that incurable disease of perverted imagination, which is the retributive infirmity of decrepit debauchés. We are only revolted at the pictures he presents to us in the satire of Juvenal and the novel which, if ascribed without sufficient evidence to Petronius Arbiter, is generally held to have been composed not later than the reign of Hadrian. Among the poems attributed to Petronius Arbiter, although it is considered doubtful whether he ever wrote any of them, there is, however, one exquisite love-strain, which some modern poets of eminence (including Beaumont and Fletcher) have imitated, but failed to equal — viz. "Lydia, bella puella," &c.*

* This poem has also been ascribed to Gallus — though it bears evidence of much later date — and is perhaps of

One prose fiction, indeed, the later Roman empire can boast, — 'The Golden Ass' of Apuleius, which contains, in the episode of Cupid and Psyche, the most beautiful allegory, veiling love not sensual but spiritual, that has ever been composed. In that tale, all which has been said by the most refining novelists of modern times, in homage to a love heaven-born and eternal, is symbolised with a delicacy of sentiment, compared to which De Staël's 'Corinne' is commonplace, and Rousseau's 'Julie' prosaic. But Apuleius was no native of Europe — he was an African; and as he confessedly did but paraphrase and enlarge his general fiction from others much more ancient, so I have no doubt that he himself never invented, and probably did not even improve, the wonderful legend of Cupid and Psyche, which forms the loveliest part of his story; that that legend is of far earlier date, and contains the germ of Asiatic fable, cultivated as an exotic by the Platonists of Egypt. I have read with some care all the extant works of Apuleius, and, though they are not without talent, and are sufficiently amusing in parts, yet they contain not a spark of the dazzling fancy, not a trace of the elevated philosophy,

the same period as the "Pervigilium Veneris," which the earlier scholars assigned some to Gallus, some to Catullus, but which later critics incline to suppose a composition of the time of Hadrian, and probably by Annæus Florus.

which combine in the myth that narrates the love, the severance, the trials, and the celestial reunion of Sense and Soul. It has been considered, with plausibility, that the story of Cupid and Psyche was among the lost novels of Miletus, that flower of the early culture of Asia Minor.

To the East, then, we must generally look for the origin of erotic literature. There it still flourishes, not only among the polite societies of Persia, not only among the tented tribes of the melancholy Arab, but in still greater vigour where manners have been the least subjected to change. To judge by all that we know of the literature of the Chinese from translation or the report of competent scholars, love is the prevalent theme of their poetry, their drama, their novels. If there be any truth in the surmise of the learned Jesuit, who, comparing Chinese with Egyptian customs, came to the conclusion that the Chinese were a colony from Egypt, we may perhaps find in Chinese literature fragments of tales which delighted the leisure of the Pharaohs, nay, perhaps attracted swarthy listeners on the banks of Nile before the Pyramids were built.

Into our own land Love, then, penetrated into our poetry, as, in Greek legend, Evian first appeared upon Parnassus — fresh from the Land of the Morn, flushed with a divine inebriety, taming the panthers and maddening the nymphs. Chaucer receives him from the Provençal and the Italian, as

they had received him from the Saracen and Arab. Where Chaucer, however, appears to write most from his own Anglo-Norman inspiration, love is not very serious. His native Venus is, like that of Horace, accompanied by Jest and Whim.* Not till the time of Elizabeth can Love be said to have attained to that solemn authority in imaginative literature which poet and novelist now accord to his sway. He is on his throne in Arcadia with Sir Philip Sidney. His brows are girt with the halo of Apollo, his locks glistening with the purest dews of Castaly, in the faery song of Spenser.

Shakspeare, however, deals with him most as the man who had really known him; known him in his playful laughter, in his despairing tears — in his awful tempest, in his celestial sunshine.

We may doubt whether Chaucer experienced in his own life more of actual love than a chivalrous fantasy or a light intrigue: we may doubt whether the Florimel that really subdued Spenser were not a Florimel of snow. But no man whose heart has beat with a genuine passion can read Shakspeare and doubt that Shakspeare had felt what he describes. He might imagine the love of a Miranda and a Ferdinand; but the extravagance of a Romeo, the jealousy of an Othello, have the vitality of remi-

* I need scarcely say that the fable of 'Palamon and Arcite' is borrowed from an Italian original.

niscence. Hence Shakspeare's profound knowledge of the many varieties in Woman — a knowledge in which he is not only unapproached by, but almost solitary amidst, his contemporaries and predecessors. The heroines of Beaumont and Fletcher have but little of the genuine woman; the female characters in Ben Jonson might be drawn by a man who only knew woman by the descriptions he had read of her in the ancients. And therefore Shakspeare, while allowing to Love all his true power over life, and clothing that power in all its manifold pomp of attributes, still maintains the due rank of the other great movers of the world — pride and ambition; the desire of fame; the sense of duty; the thirst of revenge; the cravings of ill-regulated intellect; the philosophy of sated passions; the sophistry of tempted conscience. When the Drama returned to a place in our literature with the restoration of the Stuarts, it is needless to describe the profligate swagger with which Love remounts his throne, and reigns without even a check from that noble sentiment by which Shakspeare had curbed his tendency to a sensual despotism. Since then, his excesses have been limited by the prudent decorum of an age less tolerant to tyrants; but still he has been established as a monarch on the stage by popular suffrage quite as firmly as if seated there in right divine; and I know not whether his power be not really the greater for the restraints imposed upon its licentious exercise.

In our English literature, it was long before Love extended his dominion from Song and the Stage to the wide and variegated realm of the Novel. By Novel I mean not the prose poem of purely imaginative romance, like the 'Arcadia,' but the representation of contemporary life and manners. With Smollett and Fielding there is much lusty gallantry, but very feeble love. One cannot persuade one's self that Sophy and Narcissa exercise a dominant influence over the lives and characters of Tom Jones and Roderick Random.

Richardson is the first of our novelists who set the fashion of concentrating all the interest of human life upon the war between man and woman. With what wondrous patience he depicts the siege of Clarissa and the stratagems of Lovelace! In that narrative, so full and so long, there is no other interest for a moment but this, "What will Lovelace do with Clarissa, and what will Clarissa do with Lovelace?"

The effect thus produced by Richardson on the craft of the novelist has been general and durable. Of all our novelists, with the single exception of Scott, he is the one whose influence has been the most profound and the most pervading on the literature of foreign nations. I doubt whether even the 'Werther' of Goethe or the 'Nouvelle Héloise' of Rousseau would ever have been written if 'Clarissa Harlowe' had not laid the trains of thought

that led to their composition. In France, more especially, even to this day, three-fourths of the novels that treat exclusively of the Tempter and the Tempted may be as clearly traced to Richardson as three-fourths of the metaphysical works that inculcate materialism may be traced to Locke; — so true is that aphorism in Tacitus, "The worst is the corruption of the best." Johnson says, "That Richardson taught the passions to move at the command of virtue." The saying is imposing, but it will not bear examination. Richardson taught a single passion to move towards the deposition of all the other grand passions by which, in a man of Lovelace's exquisite genius, we might suppose that one passion to be counteracted and controlled. And when passion is adorned with all that wit, courage, grace, youth, and beauty can bestow on it, and moves against virtue, virtue does not command passion because it has the right to reprove, and may have the authority to punish it. Moralists in Bolt Court may feel that no admiration for Lovelace can lessen their solemn sympathy with virtue; but drop Lovelace down in Mayfair or the Chaussée d'Antin — nay, in any rural village green, where some guileless Clarissa is just fresh from the Sunday school — and, let Lovelace move against Virtue, Lovelace will win the day. The fault of Richardson, however, is not in having made a criminal hero extremely interesting, for that every true artist in

fiction must necessarily do whenever he employs criminal heroes for æsthetic ends, and Shakspeare has no heroes who interest an audience more than his criminals do: Richardson's fault is in making, throughout so minute a record of human existence, the main object of a clever man's life to be the siege of a woman's virtue, and the main object of a clever woman's life to be her defence from the unprincipled but charming invader. But if this be a fault of conception (perhaps it is hypercritical to call it one), the fault vanishes amidst the splendours of art and genius with which the execution of the design is accomplished.

While Richardson has been thus influential over the greatest authors of prose fiction on the Continent, he has been no less potent over the very feeblest of such writers as we in England read but do not boast of. Certainly few of our fashionable novelists have ever read Richardson, but nine-tenths of our fashionable novelists are exclusively erotic. Take the love-story away from their plots, and, insipid though the love-story be, nothing of a plot would remain. Now, those nine-tenths of our fashionable novelists would never have been erotic if Richardson, whom they have never read, had not written. Men always borrow the most from the writers they have not read. Any one you meet between Pall-Mall and Temple Bar will say, if you so humour your talk with him, something about the law of gra-

vitation; but you will not meet one man in a hundred thousand who has ever read Newton. Thought travels like light, and you can no more trace thought to one author than you can trace light to one star.

It must, however, be admitted that the most eminent of our novelists in the present day, while they have not perhaps analysed Love less profoundly, nor depicted it less vividly, than their predecessors in England, or even their brilliant contemporaries in France, have yet limited its sway more justly to its normal and ordinary influence over human life. The reason for this must be sought in the manners of our land and time. And having thus treated of the influence of Love upon imaginative literature, so it is necessary to the completion of the task I have rashly undertaken, that I should hazard some speculative suggestions as to that proportionate place and rank which the passion of Love really occupies in practical life."

Here Metellus paused a moment, and then modestly said, after the usual fashion of lengthy speakers, "I fear that I have shamefully abused the pledge of self-restraint imposed upon Gallus, whose impatience I have more than once perceived; but it was necessary to clear my way to the higher, and, I hope, more interesting division of my subject, by a variety of critical illustrations extending

over a very wide surface. Shall I proceed and finish at once all I have to say, or shall we adjourn the debate?"

To a question thus decidedly put I, as host to the lecturer, could make but one answer. "Pray proceed. It is not till I have heard the second part of your erudite essay that I can clearly understand the aim of your purpose in the first. Besides, I am anxious to learn, when Gallus asserts his privilege of reply, what part of a discourse that appeared to me the reverse of exciting, and, indeed, singularly inoffensive and unprovocative, should have roused within him the indignation which is still visible in his lowering countenance!" "Inoffensive! unprovocative!" exclaimed Gallus; "you apply those epithets to the discourse of Metellus! you, who have pretended to describe love, and would, I daresay, pretend to have felt it!" "Gallus, be not personal," said I. "Mind your own business, which is to answer Metellus if you can. Meanwhile, I repeat, let him proceed." Gallus folded his arms, closed his eyes, and resigned himself, muttering, "Horace, like Shakspeare, is quotable on every occasion of life —

'Durum: sed levius fit patientia.'"

THE

INFLUENCE OF LOVE UPON THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF HUMAN LIFE.

METELLUS thus resumed: —

"Providence has placed in the human heart a disposition intimately connected with the instinct of the senses, but still plainly distinguishable from their mere animal law — viz., a tendency to selection and preference of one human being apart from the rest of his sex or hers; with whom, while the preference last, it seems as if joys were doubled and griefs were halved.

This preference, both in its early stages and in its lengthened duration, may be, and commonly is, either wholly independent of the instinct I have referred to, or, if affected by it, the influence is not discernible. The new-born reverence which the youth feels for the virgin to whom his heart is unaccountably attached at first sight, and the first favouring thought that the virgin bestows on him from whose gaze her own eyes fall confused, are certainly as pure from any consciousness of ignobler passion as,

in the Persian poetry, is the attraction of the nightingale to the rose. And, supposing this strange and mutual preference to be followed by nuptial union, long years afterwards, in the winter of old age, it may still as serenely cheer the atmosphere around it, though its light be no longer fused in the colours that it took from the senses. At the verge of the grave it will regain the purity which distinguished its image when it first revealed itself on earth, chaste in its native tenderness, like a gentle visitant from heaven.

Nor is this preference necessarily, nor even usually, caused by those attributes which, a physiologist might tell us, appeal the most forcibly to the intelligence of the senses. Men do not choose their helpmates as the Spartan kings were ordained to choose their wives — from the superiority of strength and stature which may fit them to be robust wives and teeming mothers. Nor, despite all that is said, and said truly, in commendation of beauty, is beauty essential to that mysterious preference which singles out one human being from the rest of earth.

Descartes — who had known love, and who treats of it with a quaint eclecticism of romantic sentiment and surgical anatomy — tells us that he found himself especially attracted by a squint in the female face; and, pondering upon the cause of that effect on his heart, traced it to his boyish fancy for a

girl who had a cast in her eye. But, always a philosopher, even in his weaknesses, when he had once thus solved, by the law of association, the mystery of strabismal fascination, he conquered the fascination itself, and the magical squint lost its charm. Unquestionably, however, it is common enough to us all to feel a peculiar impulsion of the heart towards some general type of countenance or some specialty of feature, not on account of its beauty, but on account of its resemblance to the first woman-face by which the heart was troubled and charmed. The trains of emotion return to their former tracks according as the image which caused their first movement is brought back to us, though but in dreams.

Beauty is the rarest of earthly gifts — incomparably more rare than even genius; and if only the beautiful were loved, lovers would form not a popular Republic but an invidious Oligarchy. Perhaps, on the contrary, persons eminently beautiful, if the most flattered, are the least loved. And there is a certain degree of truth in a current aphorism, "That no affection is so lasting as that for an ugly woman."

A great deal of acquired vanity, rather than impulsive preference, goes to the courtship men render to an acknowledged beauty. It is a great thing to have at one's hearth, as on one's wall, a picture that all will admire. Real and lasting preference is in

proportion to its freedom from all corrupting motives in its choice — all admixture from vanity and pride, as well as from avarice or ambition. Nine-tenths of what passes for the love of another are but the reflections of self-love. Thus no men are so courted by women as those who are distinguished for something which the world admires in men as it admires beauty in women; for instance, fame, no matter how little women can comprehend the qualities by which the fame be achieved. It is said that Sir Humphry Davy received more love-letters in a day than any handsome young Guardsman would receive in a year, and that the Hero of Waterloo was favoured with more declarations of passionate attachment when he had passed the age of eighty than had ever greeted him when in the prime of life as the comparatively obscure Colonel Wellesley.

Men thus are often moved to pay courtship to beauty as women make advances to fame; — seeking less to appropriate to themselves that which they love than that which is admired.

There is a pleasant anecdocte, in Tallamant's Memoirs, of the Duc de Guise (son of Balafré), who, after a long courtship, prevailed upon a fashionable beauty to grant him a private interview. The lady, observing him very restless, asked what ailed him. "Ah, Madame," answered the gallant, "I ought to have been off long ago to communicate my good fortune to all my friends." Men often

marry celebrated beauties as the most decorous way of flattering their vanity by parading a *bonne fortune*.

But what is it that really attracts the heart of the one human being towards the other, apart from the qualities that allure the senses or inflame the vanity? That is the insoluble enigma. Well does the Latin elegiast say, "In love there is no wherefore," "Quare non habet ullus amor," — a thought which has been thus prettily expanded by one of our old poets: —

"Reason and wisdom are to love high treason,
Nor can he truly love
Whose flame's not far above
And far beyond his art or reason.
Then ask no reason for my fires,
For infinite are my desires.
Something there is moves me to love; and I
Do know I love, but know not how or why!"*

A clever man sees a girl in whom no one else recognises attraction, and falls in love with her. A charming woman sees a man to whom others can concede nothing to captivate the eye or win the fancy, and falls in love with him: —

"Why did she love him? Curious fool, be still; —
Is human love the growth of human will?"

* Alexander Brome.

So sings the poet of our time, to whom Nature gave all that we can suppose most captivating to the eye, the fancy, and the heart of woman, and who never seems to have been heartily loved by any one woman out of the many whom he wooed, though he united a beauty more haunting than Raffaele's, with the melody of a song more eloquent than Petrarch's.

I remember a lady in the great world who appeared the inanest mere woman of fashion, to whom satire would ascribe "no character at all." She had rank, wealth, that social station which in itself is, through pride, a preservative of virtue; she had that personal liberty for the gratification of every whim, which the most indulgent of husbands has not often the temper to concede or the opulence to afford. One night, at a provincial ball, in which she was the greatest personage, a female friend, on whose arm she was leaning, felt her hand tremble, and said, in surprise and alarm, "What ails you?"

She answered, faintly, "I see my fate."

"What do you mean?"

"Look there!" The friend looked where the fine lady directed her eye, and saw, entering the room, a small man with a large nose.

"Your fate?" she said, puzzled. "That rather ugly gentleman? — Do you know him?"

"I never saw him before."

A little while after, that poor lady fled from her splendid home, and she died in a jail to which his debts condemned her seducer.

I do not palliate the offence of this lady, by pleading the excuse that she would have made for it. No thoughtful mind can accept fate as an excuse for conduct. Conduct is fate all the world over; and, if it were not, the world, for its own safety, must say that it is. But that preference of which I speak, and which has no wherefore, may sometimes pass through a critical stage in which all the force of reason and conscience is needed to restrain it from that terrible descent into Avernus whence there is no upward return. What is that critical stage? Happily it is not the first, and happily for woman, to whom the punishment is the more awful, it can never come except through her own abandonment of all the outworks which society raises up for her defence. Not one man in a million ever went farther after a decided and contemptuous "No!"; but a Half No from a woman is her most tempting solicitation to man.

Now, if Love be thus potent during that part of his reign in which he is neither romantic sentiment nor serene affection, but an absorbing monopolising passion, Providence benignly admits, and the social world wisely raises up, numerous checks to a tyranny that would otherwise be destructive to moral order and domestic security. A great German poet has

said that, in spite of all the laws of philosophy, the world goes on its everlasting way through the two master agencies, Hunger and Love. Not so. Thanks to the laws of philosophy, or to the philosophy of laws, the world is maintained in its progress by the vigilant safeguards and sentinels imposed on the invading irruptions of Love and of Hunger. Were all who are hungry let loose upon property, men would soon have nothing to eat unless they devoured each other. Therefore, the common sense of the common interest, by opposing law to the instinct of hunger, and impelling hunger to work, to think, to serve, and to save, for its daily bread, protects the life of all organized societies; and hunger itself becomes thus gradually reduced to a quiet, orderly, and not very visible ministrant to that accumulated wealth by which communities are fed. A poor mechanic, in a civilized state, is rarely stung by hunger to help himself by fraud or by force to the stores of another. He has kept himself from the pressure of a want by the habitual exercise of a virtue. He has forestalled the solicitations of hunger by the provident exertion of industry. In like manner, the common sense of the common interest has protected the social world against the frenzy of love; and the checks outwardly placed on its excesses have served, like those upon hunger, to correct, regulate, and discipline the natural cravings of the instinct within. Thus love, in a very civilized state, is refined, or kept back, by a thousand

counteracting suggestions, not of honour and conscience alone, but of calculation, custom, convention. In our nineteenth century, King Cophetua might certainly fall in love with a beggar-girl, but His Majesty would discreetly argue himself very soon out of that unbecoming predilection, and his "preference" would at least never become the admiring theme of the popular ballad-singer. A page might certainly fall in love with King Cophetua's daughter, but his "preference" would never go far enough to make him a deserving subject for the Tragic Muse. And so, in the large intermediate space between monarchs and beggar-girls, in proportion as a society highly educated presents to fancy and aspiration diversified objects and counter-irritants of emotion, Love relaxes his practical hold upon the fate of his votaries; and when his fever comes to the crisis, the crisis is very soon over, and the patient in ordinary cases finds that "to bear is to conquer our fate."

It is fortunate that, as society becomes refined and instructed, it should thus engender of itself opposing agencies to the very passion which would otherwise gain a fatal preponderance in the ampler leisure, the freer intercourse, the more cultured graces, of communities smoothed into charm by their own frivolities, as diamonds are polished by their own dust. Unquestionably, if we could image to ourselves the picture of a wealthy and luxurious commonwealth, in which there was no other food for excitement, no

other vent for those strong emotions of hope and fear which have been called the "winds of the soul," than the single occupation of falling in love and falling out of it, we should know that the doom of that commonwealth was sealed. To use the language of astrologers — Venus and Saturn would be joint-malefics in the House of Death, subjected to the direct opposition of Jove. The whole substance of the body politic would become corrupted: masculine dignity, womanly honour, would disappear; and love itself, in the emancipation from all salutary control, would, like other liberty carried to excess, lose amid the licence of anarchy the virtues it had acquired under the discipline of restraint.

Indeed, when we look to the old Eastern nations, in which we have sought the origin of that exaggerated influence which love has obtained in the romance of Europe, we may see that it was the mal-organization of their society which concentred upon the single idea of love the prurient varieties of imagination diseased.

Those magnificent satraps had no masculine career: whatever intelligence they possessed, whatever excitement they sought, was directed to the gratification of sense. And to the taste of those magnificent satraps the poet naturally modulated his strains, and the tale-teller adapted his inventions.

That, in spite of the seclusion of the seraglio, woman found scope for the exercise of that power

which it is her strongest tendency to acquire over man, is evident from the anecdotes scattered through Herodotus. And among the ladies of the harem were concocted the intrigues by which sultans perished, though begirt with armaments whose march had exhausted rivers. Indeed, the Sacred Writings furnish abundant instances of the influence which women obtained over their Oriental lords; though the lightness of this essay will not allow of illustration from so solemn a source.

So in the courts of our European mediæval kings, wherein intellectual culture had introduced wants, unsatisfied by tedious conquests or martial forays; while, being confined to the comparative few, it had not yet stimulated those manlier forces which require the scope and competition that free intercourse with multitudes alone can give — Love, corrupted into profligacy, occupied the leisure and inflamed the genius. In France, from the reign of Francis I. to the death of Louis XV., we have the records of a silken circle, in which clever men and accomplished women had little else to do but to demoralise each other. Nay, it is remarkable that wherever intellect is denied, by political laws, the field and the freedom which it is permitted without question to seek in the privileged Saturnalia of Love, there, the more elaborate the culture, the more polished the refinement — the more the object which our existent philosophy seeks in knowledge becomes defeated, and

Vice, instead of being expelled by the Muses, is elected their arbitrary sovereign.

Glance over the Correspondence which reveals the manners of nobles and scholars, united each to each, in the age of the Medici, by a learning so exquisite and a depravity so profound — the sty of Epicurus adorned with the marbles of Phidias — the garbage of a hogwash served up in vessels of silver! What a type of a whole society in Aretin! — what a blot upon manhood and scholarship is that personation of intellect corrupted and fancy debauched!

In our time, the immense accumulation of images which knowledge, diffused among the many, and expanded therefore to the practical interests of the many, presents to the cultivated mind; the adaptation of sciences to the familiar uses of life; the admission of political speculation which, even in despotism, engages men's thoughts, though forbidden to determine their actions; the numerous fields opened up to the pursuit of wealth and of honours; the infinite subdivisions of mental labour which have branched out of new competitions and new rewards; that vast opulence of idea, that teeming variety of life which are brought before us every day in the pages of our newspapers; — all tend to counteract the autocracy of a single passion, and the morbid indulgence of a single fancy.

Thus the works of imagination, in which the character of our time has been most faithfully re-

presented, have sought many other sources of interest than that which springs out of a mere love-plot. And although, in writers of inferior genius, Fiction has laboured hard to preserve on its page that arbitrary Cupid which it took from the Paphos of an exploded mythology, the poor urchin has already a faded old-fashioned air. Readers find that the little archer, "whose arrows no breast can escape, and whose wounds no balsam can heal," is not now-a-days that despot in practical life, ruling "court and camp and grove," which he might have been in days gone by. Perhaps they do not positively say so — for in all superstitions a belief passes away long before men acknowledge it has passed; but they yawn in the face of the Cupid in whose smiles or frowns their ancestors revered the mightiest vicissitudes of Fate.

Does this seem a melancholy dogma to the young and ardent? Does it provoke scornful refutation from the lover, who would blot from his life all the hours that must pass ere he see Aminta again? from the maid who believes that all light will be gone evermore from the sun, if Phaon prove false to his vows? Pause and reflect, O Aminta! O Phaon! my moral, when fairly examined, is less mournful and cold than you deem it. In those times and lands wherein love really seems to have been the mainspring of existence, was that love worth the having? Was it the love which would

bid the heart yield its life-blood to save from a pang the beloved, and which the soul may bear away without stain when it soars to the realm of the angels? Dost thou, O child of our land and our age, honour the love that held sway in the Median seraglios? in the *Parc aux Cerfs* of the Bourbon? the love that taints the rose-garden of Aretin with the breath of a cynical devil?

Thou sayst "No," with contempt or in shudder! But these were the times and the circles in which love boasted to be the soft despot whom thou thinkest I degrade in reducing his sway to the rule of the limited monarch. And if in concrete societies love would cease to be true love were he not held in check; so, in life, individual love would cease to be true love had he no law but his own tyrannous will.

In the course of my career I have had acquaintance with men who have adopted the craft of love-making as their exclusive profession, and among them I have never met one who had known love in good earnest. They might tell you in May that life was a blank without Chloe: meet them in June, and they tell you the blank is filled up. What! with Chloe? "Pooh, Chloe! — that baggage! — No. With the nymph I saw yesterday, Daphne!"

In fine, I believe it to be with prosaic Lotharios as with poetic Anacreons — they who are always making, and they who are always writing, love, are

the last persons likely to have an intimate acquaintance with the god.

For in real love, as in perfect music, there must be a certain duration of time. Constancy is not its merit, but its necessity. If the one person be solemnly chosen out of the millions, the millions, though each were a Venus stepped down from her pedestal, would be but a gallery of statues. "Love," says Sir John Suckling in one of his letters — "love is of the nature of a burning-glass, which, kept in one place, fireth; changed often, it doth nothing."

This for the Lotharios. As for the Anacreons, Love is by temperament silent. He is too nobly jealous of the beloved to make her the property of the public; his heart is filled with a poetry too extravagant for artistic verse. He keeps it to himself till it become calmly subordinate to the genius over which for a time it is tumultuously supreme. A love remembered will, in due season, if known by a poet, find in verse or in fiction some adequate symbols that shadow forth the emotions past; but love felt at the moment cannot chronicle its sighs in odes. Cowley wrote a long series of amorous poems called the 'Mistress;' but of all men in the reign of Charles II., Cowley was perhaps the one most innocent of a mistress except in a poem. Very possibly, if we had an authentic biography of Anacreon himself, we should find that the great German scholar, who

contends that the Teian poet was a man of temperate habits and moral character, is quite in the right, and that the real Anacreon was a sober, shamefaced old gentleman, much too careful of his health and his peace to be fevered by Bacchus or stung by Cupid.

The true influence of Love over human beings in the civilized communities of our time and country I conceive, then, to be very much this: the great majority of men know love in its first intuitive preference; a very large proportion know love in its later stage of affectionate custom: and it is only a very small percentage that have ever known love in all the intensity, and throughout the duration, of its solemn and absolute passion.

It is this love of which Rochefoucauld speaks when he compares true love to apparitions and ghosts, of which every one talks, and which very few have seen. Nor is it without justice that he says elsewhere, "There are a great many people who would never have been in love if they had not heard love so much spoken of."

In the humbler classes, the peasant or the artisan selects the sweetheart of his own rank and degree. He has very seldom to encounter those grave obstacles which strengthen the current of the love they oppose. He does not much trouble himself with the thought how he can maintain a wife; he relies on the strength of his own arm to bear the

weight of the slighter form that leans on it. And so peasant and mechanic will ever do, despite all that political economists may preach to them. It is one of the grandest advantages they have over those above them, that they are justified, even by prudence, in adding the most steadfast and the sweetest of all motives to that industry through which, humble though it seem, they are the founders of commonwealths and the mainsprings that move the civilization of the world. As a certain amount of taxation is the best and surest means to stimulate the energies of the community that must bear the burden, so a certain additional weight on an individual's industry only gives more force to his sinews and infuses a higher spirit into his heart.

The workman has seldom to complain of a crossed attachment. When it is crossed, the pain of his disappointment has seldom much effect on his fate. It is only in very poor novels, written by authors who knew nothing of his class, that the loss of his love makes the peasant enlist as a soldier, or sneak into the skulking craft of a poacher, in Byronic disgust of this "wrong world." He usually marries in youth, which is proof sufficient for all ordinary reasonings that he has known no love-grief so bitter as to turn his honest affections into gall. After marriage, there is little leisure, in his way of life, for that illicit Eros, whose torch is only lighted by idleness. Exceptions of course

there are, especially in large towns. Sometimes a workman will run away with another man's wife; sometimes an artisan or even peasant (though very seldom, indeed, in England) will be maddened by jealousy into homicide. But we do not look to the Police Court, nor to the Old Bailey, for the average specimens of humanity. The exceptions do not invalidate the general truth which all who know much of the working-class will readily own — viz., that, whatever the errors love may tempt them to commit, those errors do not last over the wedding-day — that amongst them the sanctity of the marriage-hearth is quietly preserved; and that the labourer, having once installed in his cottage the girl he has won to be his good woman, is not troubled by hopes and fears for any other daughter of Eve to the end of his days.

In agricultural districts the peasant's wife is generally of better education and quicker mind than her husband: she has been kept longer at the village school; she has, perhaps, been in service in houses where she has acquired a sharper knowledge of character and life. Generally she obtains a certain ascendency over her helpmate, and, if she ever have a rival, it is the sign of the public-house.

In manufacturing towns, on the contrary, the mechanic is usually possessed of mental acquirements far superior to those of his wife; he has read more, he has thought more. But man is by nature the

most domestic of all animals; and if the mechanic and his wife are both sober, the chances are that they will agree very comfortably together; and that, in spite of his superior culture, the wife will govern the husband in the ordinary affairs of life. His temptations, poor fellow! are often sharp enough, but lawless love is not one of them; and if he shatter his household gods, it is probably by a strike for the wages which he would devote to their service.

We may presume, then, that among the humbler classes there is less to thwart the preference, and, the object of selection won, less to lead the affections illicitly astray, than in those ranks commencing with the poorer grade of an aspiring middle class up to the loftiest spheres of aristocracy, in which the choice of the heart is necessarily curbed by conventional prejudices and the vagaries of the senses perpetually tempted by the leisure that indulges their caprice, and the wealth that secures their gratification.

And thus love, in the humbler classes, is ordinarily bounded to the quiet preference inflamed by no obstacles, and the domestic attachment disturbed by no poignant jealousies. With them (at least in our northern climates), it escapes the critical interval of that absorbing passion in which fiction chiefly delights to present its power.

So we shall find that in those classes constituting the majority of our race, though the influence of woman over man's condition and fate is immense,

and can scarcely be exaggerated, it is not the influence which fiction ascribes to the passion of Love. Only in idyls do shepherds neglect their flocks to carve the name of Phyllis on the rind of their master's trees.

What is, then, the influence of woman? The answer is, that which we shall find predominant in all classes of Christian Europe, — the DOMESTIC INFLUENCE.

The influence which really sways man's destiny, affects his character, mingles unconsciously with three parts of his thoughts, dictates mechanically three parts of his actions, is one that grows not out of his love, but out of his marriage — the subtle complexity, the binding endurance, of "Family ties." I shall attempt to make this truth more perceptible before I close.

Glance now over Love in his influence over the more educated classes — classes familiar with his literature and plastic to his sentiment.

In these classes how very seldom it happens that the instinctive preference to which the soul is mysteriously attracted attains the possession of its object! How few can say that they ever won the idol of their first love! Circumstances, infinitely more numerous and hostile now than in the time of Shakspeare, rise up, not only to fret the course of true love, but to intercept its rush at the fountain-head.

Who of my readers, from the clerk to the prince, has not seen a face that irresistibly charmed him,— felt while he gazed on it as if some young dream had come into life, — as if with that face by his side he could be blessed in a desert? And the face fades away amidst the crowd, to be seen, perhaps, never more; — or, grant it be seen again and again, he has been forced to steel his heart against its witchery. He might as well love a bright particular star. Hope is out of the question. There is some overwhelming reason, in the conditions of the world itself, why that face can never shed its smile over the world for him.

That romance of a vague unaccountable preference — stopped at the onset, and yet remembered by the old man as he sits with his eye upon dying embers, and his mind gazing into former years — that romance I believe to be far more common than the vehemence of fatal passion

> "Which frets its hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more!"

Yet the vague preference has had no real effect on the great drama of social life. The man has married another, acquired or wasted fortune, grovelled or soared, laughed or wept, just as he would have done if that face had never glanced along his path.

But suppose the preference has gone farther; — suppose it has found favouring occasion, and has

ripened into passionate love. Well! but how many in every hundred men marry her with whom they have been most in love? Among the educated classes in European society, are there ten in a hundred? Are there five? — I doubt it. The opposition of parents, the inequalities of fortune, an untoward quarrel, a vain misunderstanding, an infinite variety of circumstances not foreseen on earth, and ascribed by astrologers to the stars, interpose between the plighted hearts, even if both are fond and loyal. But sometimes it happens that the love is unreturned, or the beloved unworthy, and the fault of one breaks the bond that seemed insoluble to the other.

Where, therefore, love has been really felt, and felt as the poet describes, it has seldom, in our day, come to the play-writer's *dénouement* of marriage.

But thus blighted or broken off, has the memory of it left a very effective and permanent influence over the lover's destiny and character? In a few cases, yes; in the great majority of cases, decidedly no.

Grant, however, for argument's sake, that a man at the age of fifty can, on looking back, trace some distinct and lasting influence on his nature and actions, in the sorrow he once felt for the loss of her whose haggard charms could not now raise his pulse by a beat, — how trivial that influence, at the utmost, compared to the effect which has been made on his life by marriage! By marriage, not perhaps

with the object of a romantic preference, nor of an ardent love — marriage, whether happy or unhappy, whether formed lightly or with due forethought — marriage, *per se* — marriage, the indissoluble adamantine bond!

So far from life closing its golden season at the gates of Hymen, and vanishing into shade behind the recesses of the altar, as dramatists and novelists so audaciously infer, it is from marriage that, with most men, the uses of life commence, — nay, from that date that, with most men, the heart enters upon its deepest and fondest record of incident and affection. The man, before idle, begins to work in earnest when he has wife and children to provide for. Before extravagant, he grows thrifty; before of loose moral code, and careless of the world's opinion, the depth of his interest in the sanctity of the home he has acquired, insensibly leads him now to respect all the safeguards by which homes are surrounded. Affections, before desultory and roving, become concentred and developed in the quiet daily demand on them. He may not have known for his wife, before wedlock, the preference or the passion I have described, but after wedlock it is generally her fault if she do not become dear to him. Even if he be a selfish man, is she not a part of himself? their fortunes, their names, their social position, are one. The husband converses with the wife, heart-open, as he can converse with no other human being; and the

children gathering round him expand his views beyond the present hour. They connect him with their mother by the links of the past, lengthening on to his farthest ends in the future. Thus the lives of few men have been seriously affected by a previous love not cemented by marriage; but the lives of most men, whether they have previously loved or not, are seriously affected by marriage; and Hymen has the force of that destiny which the fictionists ascribe to Cupid.

The old adage tells us that in wedlock there is no medium — it is a blessing or a curse. We must take this adage, with a certain reserve. Marriage, indeed, is a curse among the darkest, where the result is the inconsolable misery of dishonour — where the heart is crushed — the objects that attach our intellect to the world shivered and scattered far and wide by the ruin that falls on the hearthstone. But such dire calamity is a lot seldom drawn from the nuptial urn. On the other hand, when wedlock is said to be a blessing, it has still the character of other blessings on earth, —

"Where joys and griefs have turns alternative;"*

or, as a poet much more unread than Herrick has said, with a depth of sadness more profound, —

* Herrick.

"What thing so good but what some harm may bring? —
Ev'n to be happy is a dangerous thing."*

Perhaps we must acknowledge, despite the adage, that, in the average of marriages, the habitual relation between husband and wife is neither supremely blessed nor insupportably wretched; it is alloyed and disturbed less by want of affection than want of respect; sufficient care is not taken to preserve custom from that familiarity which breeds contempt. And whereas there is no relation of life in which there should be so delicate a care not to wound the *amour propre*, there is none in which, by a hasty word, the *amour propre* is so frequently galled. But even where this is the case, and the consequence is a snapping or a sullenness between man and wife which would be wholly unknown to two well-bred acquaintances living under the same roof, there are many things in the settled married state which counterbalance the discomfort of "faults on both sides." There is the routine of employments, which the regularity of domestic mechanism has established, to take off the mind from brooding over petty annoyances; there is the unity of interests which, in course of time, compels some amalgamation in the differences of temper; there are the bonds of children; above all, there is the silent operation of Habit — that

* Earl of Stirling's 'Darius.'

great reconciler of man to the fate that he cannot change.

And if the Benedick find many little thorns in his bed which he did not count upon when he first took his Beatrice for better or for worse, still, at the end of ten years, he will own that he has also many adequate compensations, if but in the development of his own faculties and resources, which needed the fixity and concentration of mind that home bestows. And Home! what a wonderful thing Home is! Man may have a splendid palace, a comfortable lodging, nay, even a pleasant house — but man has no home where the Home has no Mistress.

Nor, since I have quoted the authority of old poets little read, in warning against too credulous a belief in a happiness not given to mortals, should I here omit to give the exquisite picture which a poet, who deserves to be read more than those I have quoted, has left of the bright side of marriage. He speaks with a hearty enthusiasm, as if he had seen what he describes. Let us try and believe him: —

"How near am I now to a happiness
That earth exceeds not. Not another like it.
The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As are the concealed comforts of a man
Locked up in woman's love. I scent the air
Of blessings when I come but near the house.
What a delicious breath marriage sends forth!
The violet-bed's not sweeter! Honest wedlock

Is like a banqueting-house built in a garden,
On which the spring's chaste flowers take delight
To cast their modest odours; when base lust,
With all her powder, paintings, and pert pride,
Is but a fair house built by a ditch-side."*

Thus, then, it is not that love which the poets chiefly delight in describing, but rather that state of marriage into which the poets as rarely follow the steps of mortals, as they presume to trace the soul's journey on the other side of the grave, that mostly affects the character and destiny of man. And if Love has presided over that state, and continues his sway to the last, then how infinitely more connected with all that becomes and adorns the divine attributes of our being he is in the union than he was in the wooing!

For we have said, with the Latin poet, "In love there is no wherefore." The preference selects, the passion illumes, its object, without much, if any, need of qualities of the beloved, apart from the mystic charm with which she has bound the heart and blinded the judgment. We may love without having discovered any excellence of understanding, any elevation of soul, any generosity of heart — nay, any surpassing beauteousness of form. And in love of this kind, which is often the fiercest, because it cannot account for its own excess, I know not if there

* Middleton, — 'Women beware of Women.'

be that which especially improves and dignifies ourselves. When a man wildly acknowledges that he could make a fool of himself for this or for that woman, he may perhaps move my pity, but he certainly does not command my admiration nor propitiate my esteem.

But though love can be, and usually is, when it is the love of the amatory poets, formed without a wherefore, there must be a very substantial wherefore for its long continuance. We may fall in love with little reference to the internal qualities of the beloved, but, if the internal qualities do not hold us firm, we fall out of love very soon after possession.

But in all love, consistent and enduring, strengthened and deepened by the silent intimacies of union, there is a constant call upon the thoughts and feelings that constitute the beauty of human nature. It must be a love that delights in noiseless self-sacrifices, that keeps habitually in view the happiness of the beloved; it must be a love, too, that is maintained by other qualities than those that exclusively affect ourselves. We cannot say after union as we exclaim in courtship, —

> "I know not, I care not, if guilt's in that heart;
> I know that I love thee, whatever thou art!"

We could not, if thoroughly honest ourselves, long retain love to a person who, however fond of

us, was always exhibiting a nature unlovely to others. It is not enough to think that the heart of one with whom we live is our own, — it must be a good heart, or, unless ours be a bad one, the perpetual jar on our sympathies will shatter affection.

Thus, when love is continued to the last, after union, it is nourished by all that is best in mind, in heart, and in soul. The "wherefore" is contained in causes not to be found in the odes of Anacreon.

Hitherto I have treated chiefly of the love of man to woman. That of woman to man is, questionless, more directly influential upon her life — its errors more fatal in their consequences; and, in return, its virtues insure to her rewards which more than suffice for her felicity. A woman who loves with her whole heart, and is convinced that the partner of her existence as devotedly loves herself, needs little more for that sense of security and content which is the serenest approach to perfect happiness vouchsafed to the denizens of earth. But man, whose uses are extended over a much larger surface, has necessarily desires as widespread as the uses; and in proportion, perhaps, to his moral opulence and his intellectual activity, his life varies and expands its anxious investments of hope and fear.

One part of this truth is expressed with intense bitterness by Medea in Euripides. After complaining that a woman must have the gift of divination

to know beforehand the nature of the man in whom she receives a master, she adds, "And if, our duties being well performed, our consort bear the yoke not reluctantly, happy indeed our life! — if not, better to die! For when man has his troubles and griefs in his home, he can go forth to soothe vexation in converse with some friend, some fellow-man of his own years; but it is our Necessity to look only to a single soul."*

The lines of the Greek poet have been felicitously imitated, and refined into a pathos infinitely more tender, by the great English poet of our own century. But the two concluding lines in the famous stanza I am about to quote do not seem to me equal in poetical truth and force to the forlorn despair conveyed in the single line of the Greek —

Ἡμῖν δ' ἀνάγκη πρὸς μίαν ψυχὴν βλέπειν.

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these cannot estrange;
Men have all these resources, we but one —
To love again, and be again undone."**

Medea does not allow to woman even that one resource "to love again and be again undone." The

* Medea, v. 249. ** Don Juan, cant. I. st. CXCIV.

woman of Medea looks but to a single soul — *πρὸς μίαν ψυχήν*.

Woman has, nowadays, less to complain of than she had in the time of Medea. She has quite as much liberty to go out and tell her woes to her friend as her lord and master enjoys. But probably, in the educated classes of society, woman nowadays as rarely marries the object of her first preference as she did in the ages more harsh to her; and there can be no doubt that, like man, in the great majority of instances marriage is infinitely more powerful over the destiny of woman than the romance of any previous attachment. Woman, by temperament, even more readily than man, accommodates herself to the lot which circumstances impose. Who has not known many girls, by no means of shallow or fickle disposition, who, to judge by all they professed, and apparently by all they themselves believed at the time, were ardently, irrevocably, everlastingly attached to adorers from whom fate decided to part them? and who has not known those same young ladies, a year afterwards, very comfortably wedded to men who bore not the slightest resemblance to the lost ideals? Comfortably wedded! Romance says "listless or broken-hearted." Not a bit of it: arranging their drawing-rooms, planning their flower-plots, consulting cheerfully their husband's tastes in the culinary department, or embroidering caps in fond expectation of "the little stranger."

Nor are they to be blamed for this, except in romance. The main object of ambition to most girls is a home of their own. Their power commences with marriage, and the desire of power is, as the old fabliast tells us, the ruling passion of the sex. Naturally grateful where she meets with kindness, and naturally pleased when she has her own way (and only when married can she be said to get it) woman's affections easily bear transplanting. Were this not so, her life would be a curse to herself, and no blessing to man; for she has not the privilege of wooing; she must be wooed. In most civilized lands, nay, in nearly all, except where the Anglo-Saxons have settled, her choice is either determined or considerably influenced by dispassionate parents; and even in England, among the higher classes of society, though her choice be not compelled, it is practically limited to a very narrow range. Her nature, therefore, reconciles itself to the lot which she cannot select with the same wide freedom of choice that is allowed to man; and the better her nature the more readily it is reconciled. The women who, linked to men on the whole worthy and good-natured, are always complaining that they are assorted to uncongenial minds, are generally hard and ungracious egotists, and would have found reasons for murmuring discontent and invoking compassion if they had married Apollo and settled in Arcady.

But do I then assert that love — love, in its

mystic purity of sentiment, in its wild extravagance of passion — the love of sweet or terrible romance — is to be banished from the theme of singer, dramatist, and tale-teller? Assuredly not. Nothing that is to be found in human nature can be banished from the realm of Art. I hold, indeed, that such a love is rare in the lives of civilized beings nowadays; still, rare though it be, it exists. It is among the potent agencies of mortal being; and, as such, cannot be ignored by the artist, whose scope comprehends all existence known or imaginable. But it is only one of the agencies, not the most universal. The desire of gain, for instance, is more common and more authoritative — more at the root of all that nurtures the sap of flourishing civilization. Man's desire of gain, and not man's desire of woman, crowds the marts, covers the sea with argosies, builds the city, ploughs the glebe, invents the loom, unites law with freedom as the best security for man's industry, and the essential condition of man's unrestricted choice in the pursuit of fortune, or the promulgation of ideas by which states become enriched because enlightened.

But would a poet or novelist be true to human life if he bounded all his art to this desire of gain, and regularly finished all his plots with its successful *dénouement* in the invention of a cotton print, or the accumulation of a plum? "Certainly not," you cry. Then why should he be more faithful to the art that

represents the moving agencies of civilized life, when he contracts all the business of multiform civilized being to Alphonso's desire to gain Seraphina, and ends his invariable plot with that marriage, where all that is most noble in Alphonso's love, and all which can alone test its more durable elements, do not end but begin? He has artistically an excuse for this partial and narrowed representation of life. The All is far too vast and too vague for an artist to grasp in any single survey. He must select a portion by which, through analogy, he gives a fair idea of the whole. The poet or the novelist (there is no distinction between the two in the laws of creative fiction — their difference is in form, not in substance) — the poet or the novelist is not a biographer nor a philosophical historian. He does not track man nor a community from the cradle to the grave. The necessity of his art compels him to a plot in which he obtains the interest of the general reader for the progress of selected events towards a definite end. Now, there are three recognised stages in man's life — birth, marriage, and death. The poet's *dénouement* cannot well be in his hero's birth; it is purely tragic if it end in his death. There remains but his marriage, as that which is the most general to man next to his birth and his death; and, as poet and novelist deal with Romance, so Romance may be said to be born with Love, and to die with Marriage. Therefore the interest of love is the most

popular, and the *dénouement* of marriage is the most convenient, for that completion of selected materials which is essential to the fulfilment of artistic story. All this I grant only to a certain extent, but that extent is exceedingly liberal. I allow to the artist the amplest right to any selection of life he chooses; when he presents to me his selection, I look at it with a conscientious desire, if he be really an artist, to judge of his work by its harmony with his own conceptions of its object and treatment. But if his selection be always of the same segment in the Great Circle, he must not blame me if the utmost praise I can give him is, "This man shows the segment more or less ably, but his adherence to a segment does not prove to me his comprehension of the circle." I have not the slightest objection to a novel or a play being entirely devoted to love-making and lovers; and, if well done, I should say, "This writer understands that part of human nature which he describes; but that part of human nature does not constitute the whole. My reverence for the scope of his art will increase in proportion as I find that in other works he shows that man has other occupations besides love-making, and is subject to other emotions than those of love. Shakspeare gives us 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Antony and Cleopatra;' and by giving us both, shows, with profound truth, what novelists and play-writers seldom own — viz., that love by no means confines his frenzy to the young;

that an elderly Antony can be as much carried away by the insane passion as a juvenile Romeo. And whereas inferior artists have only drawn from the love of the old, elements for farce and ridicule, Shakspeare shows that in such love there is the tragic element as awful as aught which leads the fancy of youth to calamity and death. But Shakspeare gives us also 'Macbeth' and 'Coriolanus,' and 'Hamlet,' 'King John,' and 'Richard III.,' in which other great movers of the human heart besides love are depicted — other great mysteries in human destinies shadowed forth. He can begin even a drama of love with the altar, instead of there closing it, and commence its tragedy with the wedded life of Othello."

Indeed, if play-writers would escape from their trite conventions, and examine, even in their great master, Shakspeare, which of his plays are nowadays most popular on the stage, they would find those to be the plays in which there is the least love-making. 'Romeo and Juliet' do not draw full houses unless some pretty new actress announce her *début* in Juliet; then the play draws, not from the interest of the play, but from the interest in the actress; as Miss Fanny Kemble drew, even in the 'Grecian Daughter.' As for 'Antony and Cleopatra,' I know not if it has been acted in my time; if so, I never saw it.* True,

* Since this was written, it has been acted for the sake of exhibiting the talents of Miss Glynn in Cleopatra. But

I rarely go to a play; but I see pretty often in the playbills, 'Macbeth,' 'Hamlet,' 'King John,' — in all of which certainly it is not love that animates the plot and attracts the audience.

But in support of my proposition, that Hymen has far more influence than Cupid over human destinies, it is observable that, while nothing more fatigues an audience than the sentimental dialogues of lovers, nothing more interests all — pit, dress-box, and gallery — than the altercations between husband and wife. The audience enters heartily into their quarrels, and sheds its pleasantest tears over their reconciliation. It is this kind of interest which keeps the 'Honeymoon' and the 'Stranger' on the stage, outliving generations of dramas infinitely more meritorious as literary compositions. "How is it," I said once to an observant actor, who had profoundly studied the sources of dramatic effect, "that lovers, however charming, are not dramatic personages? but let them marry and then disagree, and a drama is completed at once."

"May it not be," answered that great Actor, the Roscius of my time, "may it not be that a miscellaneous audience needs, for the full force of its sympathy, situations which appeal to the most familiar

even the excellence of her performance could not retain long the attraction of the play, and the love passages were certainly not the most effective.

elements of emotion? Few persons in such an audience ever made, or ever will make, love as the poets do; but most persons in that audience have had, or are destined to have, quarrels and reconciliations with their wives."

Nevertheless, there is indeed a love, as intense, as absorbing, as fatal in its influence, as the wildest imagination of fiction can conceive. But, happily for the world, not only is such a love rare enough to be almost abnormal, but, in proportion as luxurious culture would otherwise tend to make the passion more frequent in highly civilized communities, counteracting agencies are created within the breast of society itself, and in the numerous distractions to one brooding thought which increased varieties of action and contemplation press and crowd on the individual.

This rare degree of love enters within the province of fiction, but in its noblest and most metaphysical province. Great artists, indeed, in their selection from Nature, prefer rare effects; but great artists alone can deal with rare effects truthfully and grandly.

Love, in all its force and intensity, is a Moral Revolution. Revolutions happen as seldom in rational lives as they do in well-governed states. When they are enacted they are not made with rose-water; least of all the Revolution brought about

by the Power who is represented to dwell among roses."

Metellus here ceased; and after I had paid him the compliments which common courtesy exacted from me, I turned my eyes to Gallus, who had not only, during the second part of the essay more than the first, evinced by many significant gestures his dissent from the lecturer's sober reasonings, but had with difficulty been restrained from committing a breach of contract, and temerariously interrupting the thread of a discourse which, long as it is now, would have been thrice as long if Metellus (a practised extempore orator) had been provoked into additional arguments and collateral illustrations. Yet now, when Gallus had the right of reply, and reply was expected from him, he remained for some minutes silent, musingly looking down upon the grass, and abstractedly plucking up the daisies within his reach. At last, with an impatient upward movement of the head, which threw back the thick curls from his brow, and with a heightened colour, thus he spoke.

GALLUS.

"I do not pretend to vie with Metellus in erudition, still less in the elaborate arrangement of methodical discourse, and it is only the strength of my cause that can win me indulgence for the rudeness

of my advocacy. The gist of my accomplished adversary's argument has been to show that love such as the poets describe, apart from that prosaic sentiment to which he gives the frigid name of "a preference," is very rarely known in real life, and therefore that, in literature, poets, dramatists, and novelists have represented life erroneously in ascribing so potent an influence to love, and concentrating so earnest an interest on the brief season of courtship. I deny both these propositions. I believe love — passionate and romantic love — to be infinitely more common among all ranks and classes of mankind than Metellus supposes; and for this very reason, which I think in itself suffices for proof — viz. that if it were not so, the literature that depicts it could not be so generally popular. For no genius could render generally popular the exposition and analysis of a feeling that was not popularly felt. Metellus says, indeed, that on the stage the bickerings of married folks are always interesting; the cooings of lovers comparatively insipid. But allowing his assertion to be true, it proves nothing in support of his argument, but rather something against it. For our interest in the quarrels of married folks is in proportion to our belief that, in spite of their quarrels, they still love one another — are lovers, though married: for that reason, jealousy is an effective passion on the stage — jealousy implies love. Let two married persons introduced on the stage be

supposed without strong affection for each other, and their quarrels would excite no grave interest — they would, at best, provoke comic mirth. If, on the other hand, the dialogues of lovers before marriage be wearisome on the stage, it is not because the audience do not sympathise with the love of courtship, however poetically extravagant or refining, but because dramatic interest needs a struggle between contending emotions. Where that struggle is expressed in the dramatic representation of a love-plot, the interest of an audience is aroused; as Corneille, for instance, creates it for the lovers in the 'Cid' and in 'Horace.'

I will not follow Metellus into the controversy warmly debated by antiquarian critics in the last century, and which he assumes, somewhat, I think, too readily, to be now pretty well settled by the common assent of scholars — viz. as to the Eastern origin of erotic poetry and romance. What I believe is, that, though the passion of love be universal, yet it requires a certain development of the more refined elements of society before the passion finds poetic utterance. When a people has emerged from its rude and aggressive infancy, and engendered within itself classes that have leisure for meditating the sweet and graceful fancies which form the intellectual holiday of life, then love begins to seek and to find suitable expression. And as poetry, like man himself, is essentially imitative, so it turns perforce, in

the first instance, to the imitation of forms already existent. If Asia be the cradle of the human race — if in Asia the rudiments of art as of science were first commenced, and up to a certain point of beauty matured into culture — necessarily the younger peoples of Europe would not only take from Asia the subjects of myth and fable, but catch from them the idealising sentiment which suggests to each people the language and the character of its poetry and romance. But as every people has its idiosyncratic genius, and as genius, though imitative, is also transmutable and reproductive, so every European people, whatever hints it received from an Oriental one, rapidly formed a poetry peculiarly its own, and in which what was imitated was soon fused into a new whole by elements changed and superadded. If the northern nations really, then, at first borrowed erotic poetry and romance from the Eastern, it was not because the East was more favourable to love than the North, but because, being the part of the world first peopled and first civilized, the younger nations had no choice but to borrow from it when their own civilization had reached that stage in which the younger races borrow from the culture of the elder. But that the East was not in itself more favourable to erotic poetry than the North, as Metellus seems to imply, is proved by this, that the erotic poetry of Europe, whatever its remote obligations to that of Asia, has long since obtained not only an elevation

and a delicacy, but a depth and a fervour of passion, to which, so far as we know of them, the Oriental Muses can present no parallel. Metellus says that in those eras of the world in which erotic literature has been most exclusively cultivated and love most idolatrously worshipped, the tone and manners has been most profligate, the spirit of the age most corrupt. If we are to accept his interpretation of love and of its literature, I admit the truth of his assertion. But it is his interpretation I reject. Though love has its root in universal instinct, yet the mere instinct is not love. The savage who knocks down his squaw with his club, and carries her home to do the drudgery he is too lazy to do, and groan under the burdens he is too proud to bear, cannot be said to know love, though he is alive to an instinct. Love is the development of the instinct into sentiments and emotions that most adorn and ennoble our human nature. Libertinage is the corruption of the instinct into trains of idea that most deform and degrade it. Libertinage, therefore, is not love, but its antagonism; and licentious literature is not the literature of love, but its libellous travesty. The truth of what I here advance ought to be clear to Metellus as a man of the world; for if ever he meet with a man who ridicules love, as the poets hold love to be, is not such a man, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, a professed debauchee?

Metellus, in that part of his argument which he treats after the fashion of a statistician, questions whether the influence of love, as a fatal passion, or as a poetry of feeling, can be very active among the large majority of our species devoted to an existence of hardy labour; while he argues for the vast extent to which the conjugal, or, as he calls it, the domestic influence, pervades and regulates their destinies. I concede to the fullest degree the weight he attaches to the domestic influence, not only in the humbler classes, but in all ranks of life. I allow also that among the working classes, especially in England, there are fewer disappointments in love, and fewer sins caused by its perversion or excess, than among the idlers of life. But I believe that among peasants and mechanics during the season of courtship there is much more ardent, faithful, and even poetic love, than the theory of Metellus supposes — that their love is more than the lukewarm attraction to which he gives the name of preference. He himself is constrained to limit his assertion to the labouring population of our northern isles — for few can be familiar with the rural life of Italy, Spain, and France, and deny the intense, and often tragical, extent to which love transports the peasant in those lands; but if the passion be less vehemently apparent in the British, it is, perhaps, not less keenly felt. It is our national character, among all ranks of life, to show little of what we feel.

Metellus struck you, as he did myself, by the force of his remarks upon the counteractions and counterpoises to the despotism of love, which the affluent, practical, and multifarious nature of modern civilization tends to create. Much of what he said on this score is, I think, both new and true in itself. But I draw different conclusions from his premises.

I agree with Metellus that love, properly so called, or at least love in its highest sense, is not a solitary power, apart and distinct from all the other great rulers and modifiers of mind, heart, and soul. But if that be so, surely the richer and grander in social attributes may be any era in time, the richer and the grander in its aggregate of ideas and sentiments should be the love which, in every era, is the culminating flower of humankind. What you call the checks and counterpoises to love are also its strengtheners. For where there is no resistance, no force is called into play. These checks and counterpoises make love more thoughtful, more steadfast; they preserve it from the levities and inconstancies to which it may be subjected in a period of effeminate gallantry. Man engaged in the masculine and healthful pursuits which an opulent and vigorous civilization affords him, is, I grant, less prone than the wanton pleasure-seekers of a former century to fall in love — less likely to allow a wrong or misplaced passion to overmaster his reason; but where

he once gives his whole heart, he is more likely to give it once for all. Metellus says that men, and women too, who have been disappointed in their affections, recover the shock — marry some one else — seem contented with their lot. The influence of blighted love on their practical life, according to him, is, for the most part, slight and evanescent. How can he know? Who goes about to advertise himself or herself as a lovelorn victim? Very possibly, however, the memory of a baffled love does not much, if at all, change the outward, and, if you so term it, the practical life of the sufferer. But it may have potently affected his inner life, sometimes for evil — more often, I believe, for good. No one can have gone through the revolutions of a great passion, and be as he was before. He may not himself be conscious of the change within him, still less is he likely to be conscious of the cause;

> "Can earth, where the harrow is driven,
> The sheaf in the furrow foresee?
> Or thou guess the harvest for heaven,
> Where iron has entered in thee?"

And this brings me to the concluding part of my plea against the chilly rationalism of my antagonist's philosophy. As he restricts far too narrowly the influence of love upon actual life, so he curtails far too rigidly the grand functions of erotic romance,

when he complains that in drama or tale there is attached to the period of courtship — to the vicissitudes and trials of love — an importance which is out of all proportion to love's share in the real business of existence.

But every kind of the higher literature is designed not to express the commonplace business of existence, but a something which adorns and exalts the history of humankind. The expounder of intellectual philosophy writes, when earnest, as if the analysis of the mind were the fittest study of man. But how slight a proportion to the common business of life can be assigned to the consideration of abstract metaphysical problems? Where is their practical use to our bakers and grocers? Yet Metellus himself would be the first to affirm that without metaphysical authors no literature is complete. And the influence of a nation's metaphysical authors will be brought to bear, however indirectly and latently, upon that nation's popular writers and men of action, and through them upon our bakers and grocers. So with all the fine arts — the painter, the sculptor, the musical composer, giving the best part of their own life to the art they severally cultivate, think and feel as if in the culture of that art the highest destiny of genius were fulfilled.

"The genius of the musician," exclaims Rousseau, "submits the whole universe to his art: he paints pictures by sounds — he makes silence itself speak

— he renders ideas by sentiments, sentiments by accents; in the depth of human hearts he excites the passions he expresses." Rousseau is here addressing himself to the young musician, and warns him that, if he feels not the charms of the great art with as enthusiastic a transport as that which is colouring the eloquence of the writer thus appealing to him, "he must not ask what is genius in music. Why seek to know what it is, for it is denied to him?" Yet again, how small a proportion of human life compared to its practical pursuits and business can be allowed to the culture or the delight in music or any of its sister arts! Still, Rousseau is right: if artists do not regard their calling with this divine extravagance of reverent fondness, no genius could enter into art, and we must strike the sense of ideal beauty out of a nation's mind. In truth, then, we are not to consider, in judging of the importance attached to the influence of love by romantic literature, whether love does or does not occupy that space in human life which such literature seems to assign to it, any more than, when reading the lucubrations of philosophers, or listening to the talk of artists, we are to consider how many men in Oxford Street or Cheapside trouble their heads about a Locke or a Gainsborough, a Kant or a Beethoven. The mission of these love-writers is to preserve to a passion common to all mankind the refining, ennobling attributes which distinguish it from the instinct of

brutes; and, by so doing, impart to the whole literature, to the whole sentiment of a nation, warmth and colour. For he errs who thinks that the influence of an erotic literature is confined to those who chiefly delight in it. Yonder lawns are not all flower-beds, but they would be only shaven grass without the relief of flowers. The phrenologists tell us that in any human head where the organ of amativeness is markedly defective, however admirably developed the other organs, moral or intellectual, may be, the whole character will want animation and glow. So it is with the literature of a people; rob it of its love-writers, and you reduce the various pomp of its colour to the cold shine of white light.

I hold, therefore, that to judge fairly of the influence of love upon human destinies, we must extend our view beyond the partial scope of circumstance to which Metellus confines his gaze, and enlarge the sweep of our vision to all the indirect and latent operations of love upon human thought and character. I hold, also, that it is a superficial and contracted criticism to say that, in romantic literature, love should occupy only the same space which a physiologist would assign to it in his work upon the organism and functions of the human species. Love is only beautiful when it is the romance of life; and, like all genuine romance, not in substance the less real because by poetry idealised.

Having thus rudely stated the main points in

which I differ from Metellus, I pass on to tender to him my tribute of admiration for defining so clearly the point in which my ideas are in cordial agreement with his own. When he condemns both the sentiment and the literature of an age wherein love is altogether travestied, and is without that shame which is its truest touchstone, as the virgin's blush is the sweetest assurance of her dawning passion, I join respectfully in his condemnation, with this protest: — That whereas he calls such diseased conditions of time the epochs in which the empire of Love was *most* acknowledged, I call them epochs in which the royalty of Love was most ignored. But both from his scorn of that wanton caricature of love, and from his eloquent insistence on the gravity of the domestic influence, I draw this deduction, — that the more closely the romantic poetry of love expresses or symbolises that passion which has its close and its diviner second birth in the domestic household love — the more, in short, its poetry interests us in that singleness of devotion which (if fates permit) the marriage bond will solemnise and sanctify, the more artistically it will embody one of those great truths in nature which art instinctively seeks to utter. Even in the old Greek poetry of the highest stamp this sublimer kind of love is expressed. The lovers in the 'Iliad' are not Paris and Helen, still less are they Achilles and Briseis — they are Hector and Andromache.

And thus our English erotic literature of this day, though less glowing in colour, is truer to love and to nature than the French, because with the French there is something inherently disagreeable; something wrong in art — that is, to the healthful human sentiment in which art should express nature — as well as in morals; in the perpetual *rechauffé* of the same worn-out vice of theme — I mean the trifling with the marriage tie. The hero of a French fiction, nine times out of ten, is in love with another man's wife, and adultery is treated as if it were a pure and guiltless affection. The Greeks never did that, neither does Shakspeare. If our English novel-writers construct a tame story out of a lawful love, it is the fault of their genius, not of their selection. Romeo and Juliet are ardent enough; but their love, though fatal, is not criminal. Romeo and Juliet are married.

In a word, the influence of love in every age varies as to its apparent character; in every age the literature that expresses it varies also in the mode of expression. But in no age does that influence diminish in consequence, as Metellus infers, of an improved society. On the contrary, where the state of society is the most moral, love is the most genuine, because the most constant and the most identified with the ennobling sentiments which it is its normal character to engender. And in no age does the literature of love exaggerate the bearings

and weight of the passion upon social destinies, except where it really ceases to be the representative of love, and becomes the cynical mouthpiece of a rake's mockery of love. Let Metellus say what he may, love and the poetry of thought with which it overruns into the literature that expresses it, are as imperishable as man's desire of happiness. Well says the most eloquent of all our preachers — a preacher who seems to me to deserve, at least, as well as St. Chrysostom, the epithet of "golden-mouthed" — "Nothing can please a man without love. Love is an union of all things excellent — it contains in it proportion, and satisfaction, and ease, and confidence."'*

As Gallus here came to a close, Metellus, with the high-bred courtesy which graces him so well both as tranquil philosopher and sweet-tempered gentleman, smiled condescending approval. "Well rgued, young poet," said he, with affable loftiness; "or rather well declaimed. I recognise in what you have said much to compliment and nothing to answer. But let our host judicially decide between us."

"Tut!" said I testily, and much alarmed, — "as if a host could ever be an umpire between two disputative guests. His duty is to be equally complimentary to both."

* Sermon on the 'Marriage Ring' — Jeremy Taylor.

Here, however, both set upon me with denials of my right to evade by mean pretexts the duty I had tacitly incurred, in listening to two avowed disputants as an unprejudiced and dispassionate party. Thus pushed to the wall, I made the best of my unwelcome position, assumed a magisterial air, and pronounced judgment.

"The difference between Metellus and Gallus is infinitely less than they imagine; it would be easy for an accomplished rhetorician of the eclectic school to bring them both into harmony, and out of their rival arguments to deduce a conciliatory conclusion: for certainly the views of either would be partial and incomplete without the views of the other. Each surveys the same ground, but one has the sun before his eyes, and the other the sun behind them. If Metellus were twenty-five, perhaps he would have reasoned like Gallus; should Gallus attain the age of forty-five, perhaps he may reason like Metellus. As to a definition of the influence of love, whether on life or literature, so comprehensive, yet so precise, as to be acknowledged accurate by persons of all ages and temperaments, one might as well try to fix a shadow at the same point on the face of the sundial.

"You have both been discussing the subject as if it were one of the problems of philosophy, whereas it is only one of the suggestive queries out of which no problem can ever be constructed. Let Gallus be

disappointed in his first love, succeed at the bar, and marry a third wife, and he will smile to remember all that Gallus, the Queen's counsel, now says as Cœlebs the poet. Let Metellus fall over head and ears in love with some pretty face to-morrow, and he will be ashamed to think how he has sought to reduce to inch-rule and measure the passion for which older and more ambitious men than he have sacrificed the empire of the world. Whether love, as the poets describe it, be, according to Metellus, only felt by the few — or, according to Gallus, be among the normal fates of the many — it is scarcely possible even to guess. For no man who happens to be in love is willing to believe that any other man knows what love is. Indeed, Goethe says somewhere, 'He only loves who imagines that no one before him has ever loved, and no one who comes after him ever will love, to the same degree that he does.' I say then, that a philosopher of the eclectic school could reconcile the differences between you. But how? — only by submitting you both to the same experiment. 'Experiment,' as Liebig finely observes, 'is a question addressed by man to Nature.' Go both of you, address that question to Nature — fall in love; then come to me, and, small as is my science, it will be enough to show that there is no distinction between you, whether in wisdom or in folly."

Here Metellus laughed, and Gallus pished; but as neither answered, I seized the advantage their

silence gave me to close a discussion which, left to itself, might have lasted till doomsday.

As we quitted the spot, the sun was slowly setting, and the birds, silent through the noonday heats, were breaking out into their evening song. When we reached the sylvan arch that forms the entrance to this favoured ground, we mechanically paused and looked back. The shadows slept on the still water and overhanging boughs, but the westering light came soft and slanting along the green alley, where the busts of the great Romans gleamed white against the dark wall of yew that backed them, bringing into bold relief the effigies of those by whom the world's practical business had been laboured out through vehement strife or crafty rule — Augustus and Brutus side by side with the calm Mæcenas, and not higher on their pedestals than the poets who had adorned the world the business of which they did not share. But the last objects on which our eyes lingered, ere we went homeward under the arched portal, through the narrow path of dark pines, were the festoons of roses that clothed the gnarled tree-stems formed into Dionæan grottoes, and the bended image of Dione herself casting her gentle shadow over the waveless pool.

END OF VOL. IV.

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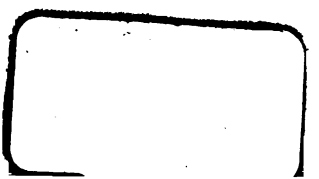
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